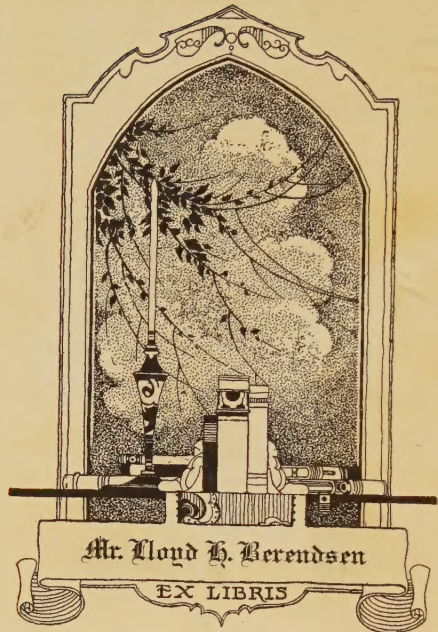




THE
AMERICAN
CARAVAN







THE AMERICAN
CARAVAN

THE AMERICAN CARAVAN

A YEARBOOK
OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

Edited by

VAN WYCK BROOKS LEWIS MUMFORD
ALFRED KREYMBORG PAUL ROSENFELD

*To my beloved husband
Lloyd Berenson*



NEW YORK
THE LITERARY GUILD OF AMERICA
1927

THE AMERICAN CARAVAN

A YEARBOOK
OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

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THE FIRST AMERICAN CARAVAN
IS INSCRIBED BY THE EDITORS
TO A TEACHER,

ALFRED STIEGLITZ.

(For Van Wyck, Lewis, Paul & Co.)

*And now another unwinding caravan
Moves foot by foot across the continent.
Superhuman vistas dwarf each dogged man,
Digging the earth for enduring nutriment.
Stranger and friend bend shoulder to shoulder here,
Striving to encompass the Brobdingnagian.
The heroic specks dig on, move on and clear
Roads for deep Beauty to grow American.*

*Four dreamers guide the undulating van,
Agreeing, disagreeing, on what they find.
One, like a bird, can see the perspective span;
The next is radiant; cities haunt his mind;
The third is keyed to passionate prophecy;
The last and oldest is slow—he looks like me.*

ALFRED.

"The American Caravan" is a yearbook conducted by literary men in the interests of a growing American literature.

The first issue is the result of a spiritual as well as geographical canvas of the country. For some time past, the editors had been conscious that the passive and recessive attitudes of the leading magazines toward new fields of reality and fresh racy attacks was depriving a great variety of national developments of their outlets. Eager to create a medium able to accommodate a progressively broader expression of American life, the editors, early in July, 1926, sent out a manifesto intended to reach all living American writers. It embodied a request for appropriate contributions. Intermediary forms too frequently discouraged by periodicals and publishers were solicited: short novels, narratives in verse, plays, groups of stories and of poems. Because the many taboos of commercial and rubber-stamp policies set limits not only to the length but on the character of literary work, authors were also urged to submit material in the smaller forms definitive of its own limits.

The quality of the response was encouraging. Original work representing many parts of the country came in abundantly from established and from unknown authors. These men and women were sportsmanlike and generous. The invitation had declared that royalties derived from the Caravan were to be divided on a prorata basis; and the manuscripts were contributed to the adventurous enterprise without assurance of the ordinary economic return.

Without preconceptions of what American life contained the editors selected from the mass of material what appeared

to them the most genuine and essential interpretations. In arranging the yearbook, they strove for a composition demonstrative of the individual and the related qualities of each contribution. Fortunate in a publisher handsomely ready to let them act, they were free to disregard all interests and ideas foreign to their own.

The editors hope that The American Caravan for 1927 will prove to the public and to the authors what it has proven to themselves: an affirmation of the health of the young American literature, and an earnest of the eventual formation of a guild for the cooperative publication of its works. Such a practical enterprise must be the effect of the growing solidarity among American writers, the sense of a common concern, means and object, at the root of these pages.

VAN WYCK BROOKS
ALFRED KREYMBORG
LEWIS MUMFORD
PAUL ROSENFELD

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THE AMERICAN CARAVAN

PAUL GREEN

SUPPER FOR THE DEAD

CHARACTERS:

FESS OXENDINE, *a Croatan Negro.*

VONIE OXENDINE, *a Negro, his wife.*

OLD QUEENIE, *a Negro conjure-woman.*

LIL
FURY } *her two daughters.*

TIME: *The latter part of the nineteenth century.*

PLACE: *In a Cape Fear River swamp in eastern North Carolina.*

The burning sun has gone down over the Oxendine clearing and a sort of night-sweat creeps up and around the cabin from the feverish surrounding swamps. . . . Fess Oxendine, a powerful Croatan Negro of middle age with a swarthy copperish face stands by the pig-pen holding a bucket in his hand and watching his pig eat slops. The pig finally finishes his guzzling and squeals and gnaws at the rails for more, but Fess pays no attention to him now, watching on with unseeing eyes. The dusk gradually thickens in the little field, swamp owls begin their mournful calling, and presently a mocking-bird bursts into a lonely chatter in the one pear tree near the garden. Fess with a mutter shakes his shoulders and looks morosely around at the sky. The spectacle of the west burning in a flame and the clouds marching in their glory seems to irritate and awe him. With a bitter oath, he lurches across his potato rows and into the house. Sitting down by the fire-place, he begins to dip snuff, now and then running his hand through his mop of heavy hair.

In the back of the room is a bed and to the left of that

a broken-down cot. A rough eating-table is in the center. Three or four pots and pans hang to the right of the fireplace and in the corner a cupboard contains some provisions and a few cracked dishes. There are two or three chairs with untanned cowhide bottoms. A door at the right opens to the outside, and in the left wall is a wooden window with a double-barreled shot gun above it. Old clothes are hanging on nails about the room.

FESS (*slapping himself and muttering*). Mon, dem down muskeeters seem lak try to eat you up. (*He beats about him with his ragged felt hat and sits listening.*) Why 'on't she come on hyuh? And dem owls, dem owls, seem lak worse dan useter. (*He lights a sputtering lamp, sets it on the table and resumes his seat before the hearth. Presently he lifts the lid from the spider sitting near the coals.*) Hunh, left me nary a bite t'eat. Knowed it. Min' take my cowhide when she come and beat the clothes off'n her. Whah she gone nowhow? (*Pondering*) Sump'n in her mind, dat's a fac'. (*He wanders to the door, looks out, and gives a sharp whistle. As he waits with no reply, his face grows distorted with anger, and he yells.*) Heigh, you, Vonie! Come out'n dat 'ere swamp ef you's down dere. (*His hound shakes himself in the yard and coming up into the door leans against his leg. The brute's gesture of kindness infuriates him and with a savage kick, he hurls him from him. In a sudden burst of anger he springs across the room, jerks down the gun and hurries to the door.*) Gwine shoot dat God-damn dog. Git f'om hyuh, you dirty suck-aig devil! Allus in de way. (*He raises his gun and fires, and the dog runs screaming across the field. He fires a second time and stands listening to the screams of pain dying towards the swamp. Then, heaving a great sigh, he sets the stock of the gun on his foot.*) Unh-hunh, I been telling dat Nick to keep out'n my way. Anh, dat purty suddent dough, shooting him lak dat. (*Chuckling*) Sho' tore up his tail wid dem shot, I betcha. (*He stands thinking*) Seem lak

Note: The final *d*'s and *g*'s are in most cases retained as an aid to reading. *Got* should be pronounced "gut," *put*, "putt," right, "raght," what, "whut," etc.

everything gitting wrong wid me. My haid des' flies all to pieces. (*Shaking himself*) Wish't I could fohgit dat'ere dream I had-oh-Lawd! Next thing I'll be putting a load o' shot in dat Vonie. (*He gets two shells from the cupboard, reloads the gun, and replaces it above the window; after which he sets about stirring up the fire and preparing supper. He places a frying-pan on the coals and begins hacking off huge slices of white side meat at the cupboard. While he is thus occupied, Vonie shuffles quietly in. She is a middle-aged Negro, dressed in dirty rags, all hips and feet and with a little pole-like chest. One eye is missing from her head, leaving a red membranous slit between her lids. Her face is dead and sagging and unrelieved by any vitality even in her one good eye. As she enters, Fess whirls upon her with a shout, raising the knife in his hand.*) Yeah, and where you been to, 'oman?

VONIE (*dragging off her bonnet and sitting quietly in a chair*). Off.

FESS (*with a snarl*). Reckon I knows it, and you gone de whole evenin'. (*Seizing her and putting the knife against her throat.*) Gooder min'er rip yo' gullet open. Whah you been to, I axes you?

VONIE (*choking out the words*). Off, off a little piece.

FESS (*crushing her down in her seat*). Spet out, spet out! What you up to. (*Vonie closes her eye and drops her head limply against his hand. He gives her throat a little sharp prick and steps back from her with a threatening chuckle.*) All right, I'll find out. Better not be up to no tricks, you know me—

VONIE (*wiping a trickle of blood from her throat with her apron and speaking in a thin stifled voice*). Gouge t'other eye out, anh?

FESS (*throwing his knife down and slumping in a chair*). Mon's 'oman tell de shuriff on him orter have 'em both bored out wid a chunk o' far.

VONIE. Ain't no shuriff dis time.

FESS. Better not be. But you act so quare all day long! Sump'n in yo' mind?

VONIE (*quietly*). Dey is.

FESS (*softly as he punches up the fire*). Still worrying 'bout it—'bout sump'n?

VONIE. Mought.

FESS. Quit it, quit it, cain't be ho'p.

VONIE. Mought could a mont' ago. (*Bowing her head in her hands*) Po' little thing!

FESS (*eying her*). Hanh?

VONIE. Po' little thing.

FESS (*sharply*). Hyuh now, thought you done say all mebbe foh de best.

VONIE. Mebbe . . . (*Levelly*) But den I been turning it in my haid. (*She darts a quick look at him and stares at the floor.*)

FESS. Dat what you been doing off in dem woods?

VONIE. Ne' mind.

FESS. Don't talk too sharp wid me, nigger. (*Vonie suddenly breaks into a low, sardonic and toothless laugh. Fess turns and gazes at her in astonishment, then shrugs his shoulders carelessly.*) Yo' misery mak' you laugh lak dat?

VONIE. Mebbe.

FESS (*bounding out of his chair*). 'y God you stop dat and git a move on you 'bout my supper. (*He moves toward her*) Hyuh I been waiting, and I got to hurry to de swamps.

VONIE. Better not go to dat still tonight.

FESS. Hunh?

VONIE. I hearn de depities is on to it. Dey watch to-night.

FESS. Dat de truf?

VONIE (*in the same impersonal voice*). Mebbe.

FESS (*stopping uncertainly*). Hyuh . . . Quare you telling me dat. Seem lak you'd want 'em to git me, way dey did t'other time.

VONIE. Don't want 'em to git you dis time.

FESS. Not if you wants to keep dat haid where it belongs. (*With a touch of kindness*) Whah'd you heah 'bout dem officers, Vonie?

VONIE. Over de creek.

FESS. What you doing over dere?

VONIE. A little business.

FESS (*raging*). A little business! Cut out dat making fun of me. (*With a sudden thought*) You ain't tell dem officers dey find me hyuh, has you?

VONIE. I ain't told 'em nothing.

FESS. Cain't see what you planning.

VONIE (*giving him another quick glance*). Lonesome hyuh by myself now. Be bad wid you in de pen.

FESS (*somewhat softened*). Sho' den I set wid you.

VONIE (*going on in cold impassiveness*). Too lonesome and her not wid me hyuh.

FESS (*gruffly*). Yeh, but I be hyuh wid you now.

VONIE. Mebbe.

FESS (*starting at her in angry amazement*). What'n de name o' God you mean, 'oman, wid all dat mebbe talk?

VONIE (*smiling queerly*). How long since it happened?

FESS. Don't put no membrance 'pon it. Fohgit it, let it go by.

VONIE. 'bout a mont', ain't it, since us found her in de water?

FESS. Well den, 'bout a mont'!

VONIE. New-moon night?

FESS (*hurriedly*). Don't know, cain't 'member all dat. Quit fetchin' it up, I tell you. (*In a loud voice*) She up above now, at rest. Preacher say she good girl.

VONIE (*with sudden vehemence*). Her wuh good too, but den somebody wuh mean.

FESS (*softly*). How come?

VONIE. Who put her in dat creek and drowned her?

FESS. Done told you she must had slipped in when she fishing.

VONIE. Why ain't you tried to find out who 'twas, you her daddy?

FESS. She got drowned, dat's all.

VONIE (*crying out*). Fess Oxendine, who done it, who wuh de man?

FESS (*snapping*). How de hell I know? (*He quickly goes over to the bed and lies down.*) I gwine lie and rest a minute. Git on now and fry me dat meat.

VONIE (*beginning to beat on her knees*). Some ob 'em

say she drowneded herself and gone down to hell. Dey say it dat day at de graveyard.

FESS. She fell in I tell you and got dat fish-line all wropped 'round her neck. Dat choked her down.

VONIE (*standing up*). And what you doing las' night talking 'bout fishlines in yo' dreams? And one time you hollered out and call her purty flower.

FESS (*starting and then speaking cunningly*). Et too much o' dat grease and dat meat, mak' me have bad dreams. Quit dat worrying. She gone on up to heaben. Sho' she sorry foh you and me way down hyuh.

VONIE (*mournfully*). I gwine find out whah she gone.

FESS. Hunh?

VONIE. Find out.

FESS (*snorting*). You must be crazy or sump'n. How you gwine do dat?

VONIE. Find out who done it too.

FESS (*sitting up on the edge of the bed*). How you mean?

VONIE. Help comin' hyuh. Us gwine find out.

FESS (*in a low voice*). Who coming?

VONIE. I been over to Aunt Queenie's.

FESS (*springin' out of bed*). Dat 'oman ain't coming in my house.

VONIE. Her and de twins is coming hyuh in few minutes.

FESS (*getting his gun*). Dem snake folks come in hyuh, I fill 'em full o' lead.

VONIE. She don't keer nothing foh dat.

FESS. Whah dey now?

VONIE. Dey come by de graveyard to git some de dirt off'n her grave.

FESS. I'll kill 'em, I tell you.

VONIE (*sitting down again and watching him intently*). Nunh-unh, you won't. Lead won't bodder 'em, and 'sides, dey'd han't you and destroy you wid deir power.

FESS. Hunh, dat hain't business! What dey gwine do hyuh?

VONIE. Dey show you.

FESS (*setting his gun down against the wall*). Pshaw, dey

cain't hurt me. Keep strong in de haid, dat's all. Mess wid me and I git me a stick and frail 'em out'n hyuh.

VONIE (*laughing toothlessly again*). You de only man'd say dat.

FESS (*throwing up his head*). And I's de man kin do it too. You low-down niggers all got no mo' sense dan a gaing o' sheep. Fess Oxendine ain't dat sort. He got de white folks blood in him, and dat old Indian chief wuh my grand-pap. (*Boldly*) Yeh, let 'em try all deir mess t'won't skeer me.

VONIE (*cryptically*). Sho' you too much man foh de nigger trash.

FESS. All dat business 'bout Jack-muh-lantern and dat Plat-eye—hunh, I seed 'em and never 'twon't nothing but old fox-far or lightning bugs. (*Laughing*) And you niggers all freezing wid fear of 'em.

VONIE. Sho', dat's all. (*She goes to the chimney and taking a little brown packet from a nail, throws it into the fire.*)

FESS (*with a shout*). Heigh, what you doing?

VONIE (*returning to her chair*). Sho' you don't keer 'f I burn up my little trick. Dey ain't no power in it, you said many a time.

FESS (*moving towards the fire*). You don't want to burn it up now wid old Queenie coming hyuh.

VONIE. Queenie ain't gwine hurt me. (*Fess stops, and Vonie laughs sarcastically.*) No, he ain't skeered o' nothin'. He strong in de haid and all-powerful. (*In a monotone*) Fess Oxendine de mighty man o' the Cumberland swamps, don't hadder put no 'pendance in no conjuh bag. He strong enough widout it, de wild buck of de river. How many men has he cut to de hollow? And de wimmen, and de wimmen! Bad Fess dey calls him. (*Teasingly*) Bedder not let dat little bag burn up.

FESS (*throwing back his shoulders*). Domn dat little bag! What I keer? (*Turning and kicking her*) Git now and fix my supper.

VONIE (*laughing again*). We all eat supper togedder.

FESS. Hunh?

VONIE. Supper foh de daid.

FESS. What's dat?

VONIE. Us gwine feed her, po' little thing.

FESS (*mumbling in perplexity*). Dat studying 'bout it got her wrong in de haid.

(There is a noise outside and old Queenie stands in the door. Fess looks at her a moment and then sits quietly in his chair near the fire. The old woman comes in, followed by her twin daughters. She is an incredibly ancient Guinea Negro of a bluish-black color, drawn and skinny, with bright little eyes, and dressed in a single garment of dull red flannel. She walks with a stick and carries a little leather satchel on her arm. The twins, dressed in the same dull stuff, and holding hands, follow her into the room. They are about sixty years old and walk with short quivering palsied steps, their tiny bonneted heads rising above their shoulders with the grace and liteness of two snakes. As they enter they fasten their beady eyes on Fess, who moves closer against the wall.)

QUEENIE (*motioning with her stick and speaking in a husky jerky voice*). Set over dere. (*The twins move over and sit down on the edge of the bed. Old Queenie looks carefully around the room and smiles triumphantly as her eyes rest on the packet burning in the fire.*)

VONIE (*rising and placing her a chair*). Set down and rest yo' se'f.

QUEENIE (*huskily*). Who dat man?

VONIE. Dat Fess, de daddy o' her. (*Fess watches her narrowly, abstractedly pulling out his snuff-box.*)

QUEENIE. Sho' dat Fess. (*Pleasantly*) Bad man, ain't you, Fess?

FESS (*growling*). What you doing hyuh in my house? (*He turns his head away and begins dipping.*) Old 'oman what de snakes uster suck. (*A sudden gleam comes into Queenie's eye, quickly passing away.*)

QUEENIE. How you all gitting on?

FESS. Gitting on all right and you might take dem two bastards off my bed and hit de grit from hyuh.

QUEENIE. Don't mind us, Fess. D'ain't no harm in us.

(*Looking at him pleasantly*) Gimme a bit o' yo' snuff, Fess. (*She smiles kindly at him. The twins lean forward expectantly.*)

FESS. Sho' I don't mind dat. Hyuh. Help yo'se'f. (*She takes the snuff and puts some in her lip and nose.*) You don't seem so quare adder all. (*Old Queenie suddenly sneezes and then inhales with a deep breath of delight.*) But dem two 'omans on dat bed—

QUEENIE (*sneezing again and smiling at him*). Dey po' harmless chillun. But ain't dey purty, Fess? I calls 'em my two snakes. Talk to him, chillun. (*They lick out their tongues at him.*)

FESS (*starting back*). Great God, dem things ain't human! (*Vonie sits down and says nothing.*)

QUEENIE. Oh, dey kin talk bedder'n dat. Dey kin say words at times. Po' things, got marked by a big rattlesnake pilot bit me in de swamp 'fo' dey was bawn. (*She sneezes again, gazing indulgently at Fess.*) Look at deir little haids and deir little black eyes, des lak a snake foh de world. (*She sneezes again and the twins grow more and more excited, their heads appearing to rise higher and higher on the stems of their scrawny necks.*)

FESS. Mak' 'em quit looking at me dat-a-way. (*She hands the snuff-box back to him.*)

QUEENIE. Dat mighty good snuff, Fess. (*She sneezes twice in rapid succession and turns and looks at the twins. Their tongues begin to flutter between their lips as they look hungrily at their mother.*)

FESS (*suspiciously*). Why you sneeze so? (*Vonie looks up intently.*)

QUEENIE (*speaking gently over her shoulder*). Good snuff, Fess, good Railroad Mills. (*She opens her mouth, wrinkles her nose, and sneezes sharply. The two women sit up stiff and straight on the bed. Queenie shouts*) Seben times, chillun, seben times! (*She totters to the door and looks out over her left shoulder*) Dere it is, dere's de new moon behime dat poplar. All ready, fixed and ready, fixed and ready.

FESS (*standing up*). Don't you start dat 'ere business, I tell you.

QUEENIE (*with a sharp gesture*). Set down in dat cheer, nigger man, set down. (*Fess gradually sinks back in his chair, waiting.*)

FESS (*muttering*). But min' what I told you.

QUEENIE (*raising her head and speaking in the air*). God befo' me, God behime me, God be wid me.

LIL and FURY (*whispering*). God be wid me.

QUEENIE. Dat right, talk out, speak fo'th chillun. Dere was po' li'l Miny drowned in de creek. Whah she now?

LIL and FURY. Whah?

QUEENIE. Mebbe in heben, mebbe in hell, mebbe walking in de swamps. (*Vonie bows her head on her knees.*) Us gwine find out, gwine raise huh ghos' f'om de daid and feed huh, gwine see who kill huh.

LIL and FURY. Who kill huh.

FESS (*with a brutal laugh*). Reckon you won't be git-ting de daid back hyuh. (*He reaches for his gun and lays it across his lap.*)

QUEENIE (*touching Vonie's bent back with her stick*). Fetch me huh dress and bonnet. (*Vonie rises and gets a dress and bonnet from a nail in the wall. Queenie places a chair to the table, spreads the dress over it, and puts the bonnet on top, forming a crude dummy. Fess watches every movement with skeptical braggadocio. Old Queenie calls*) Chillun!

LIL and FURY (*softly*). Yeh-mam.

QUEENIE. Kin you heah me?

LIL and FURY. Us heah you.

QUEENIE. Kin huh heah me?

LIL and FURY. Huh heah you too.

QUEENIE (*chuckling*). Us gut de power?

LIL and FURY. De power.

QUEENIE. Fetch me de free plates and de bowl. (*Vonie goes to the cupboard and brings the dishes to the table. Old Queenie sets them out, a plate before the dummy, one at each end of the table and the bowl in the middle.*)

FESS. Sech a pack o' fools!

QUEENIE. Come to de table, chillun. (*With jerky steps they move over and seat themselves, one at each end of the*

table. Queenie opens her satchel and takes out a dirty little paper bag and empties it into the bowl.) Po' in, po' in; dirt f'om huh grave.

LIL and FURY. De graveya'd dirt.

QUEENIE (*pulling out a handful of herbs and placing them in the bowl*). Bring me de far-coal, 'oman. (*Vonie brings a fire-coal on a piece of wood. Queenie takes it in her hand and blows on it.*)

FESS. Great God, it don't burn her!

QUEENIE (*dropping it into the bowl*). Blow on it, chillun. (*They bend their heads toward the center of the table and blow in the bowl. Presently a curl of smoke rises upward.*) Breave dat smoke down in you. (*They inhale the fumes and sit stiffly back in their chairs looking unblinkingly at old Queenie. The old woman draws several pieces of white meat from her satchel and places one in each of the three plates.*) Eat dat, chillun. (*They begin eating. Vonie comes up near the table and stands watching.*)

FESS. What dat dey eating? (*Horried*) I bet to Christ dat rashers of dead folks!

QUEENIE. See anything yit?

LIL and FURY (*dreamily*). Not yit, Mammy.

QUEENIE (*pulling out three dark objects resembling frogs and placing them on the plates*). Eat dat, chillun. (*Queenie peers into their eyes as they eat.*) See yit?

LIL and FURY. See little bit.

QUEENIE (*huskily*). What dat, chillun?

LIL and FURY. Sump'n 'way, 'way in a big snow field.

FESS (*jumping out of his chair*). God A'mighty, dey eating frawgs. (*Queenie waves her hand behind her and Fess gradually sinks back in his chair, staring at them with open mouth.*)

QUEENIE. Look clost, look clost. Is dey people dere?

LIL and FURY. People dere.

QUEENIE. Huh dere?

LIL and FURY. Cain't see um.

(*Old Queenie pulls out more dried herbs and puts them in the bowl. Thick clouds of smoke pour upward and settle about the room.*)

QUEENIE. Breave it, chillun, breave it. (*She takes a little red flannel pouch out of the satchel and pours some white powder in each of the three plates. The twins wet their fingers and dip the powder into their mouths. Queenie coaxes them on*) Look down, 'way down yander in dat t'other place. Look down.

LIL and FURY (*in a far-away voice*). Us looking.

QUEENIE. Kin see dere? (*They suddenly draw back horrified.*) Look, look dere, I tell you.

LIL and FURY (*shuddering*). Ah! (*They close their eyes and sway from side to side.*)

QUEENIE (*sternly*). Look down dere, I tell you. (*She pulls out a handful of hair and casts it into the bowl. There is a quick puff of flame upward, and Lil and Fury rear back with a low moan.*)

VONIE (*dropping in her chair with a cry*). Don't make 'em look, don't make 'em. Dey done see sump'n, sump'n bad. (*She hides her face in her arms.*)

QUEENIE. Look down dere!

LIL and FURY. Kin see now.

QUEENIE. See huh?

LIL and FURY. See huh.

VONIE (*shrieking*). Po' little Miny down dere in hell! (*She covers her head with her apron.*)

QUEENIE. Keep yo' eye on huh, don't lose huh. (*She begins to chant as she draws fetishes from the satchel and arranges them on the table.*)

Feathers, cakes and beans and cawn,

Thumb of de bastard son jist bawn.

Spider, wasp and field-mice tongue.

FESS (*shooting out of his chair with a yell*). I done see dat-ere bonnet move on de cheer! (*He jerks up his gun.*)

QUEENIE (*chanting*). Eye of a man de gallus hung.

FESS (*snarling, as he shakes his gun*). You quit dat conjure business, don't I shoot you. (*He suddenly starts for the door, but old Queenie steps before him holding up her stick.*)

QUEENIE. You ain't gwine out'n hyuh, black man, till we's done. (*With a quick movement of her stick she bends down and draws a line on the floor from the door to the fire-*

place, enclosing Fess.) You step over dat line and you fall daid. Stay back dere man and don't you move. Do, I ruin you fohever. (*Fess puts out his foot as if to step over. Queenie watches him with uplifted head and the twins moan loudly. Finally he slinks back to his chair and sits down shivering.*)

FESS. All right, God domn you! I wait and see what you up to.

QUEENIE (*laying out more fetishes*).

Devil's snuff and de dried dog brains,

'Oman's scabs dat died in chains.

Ground calf-tongue and de black cat's bone—

(*Raising her voice in a high pleading.*)

Come up, Miny, git yo' own!

FESS (*beating himself with his hat*). Dat domn smoke mak' me feel quare. (*Huskily*) Hunh, I keep strong in de haid, dat's what. Dey cain't hurt me. Dat old bonnet dere limp as a rag yit.

VONIE (*whining under her apron*). Miny, Miny!

QUEENIE. Whah she now, chillun?

LIL and FURY. Kin hardly see, 'bout gone.

QUEENIE. Keep looking, keep looking. (*She takes out a small egg and breaks it in the bowl. Then she pours a small bottle of fluid in.*)

Black snake ile and rain-crow aig,

Puts de stren'th in the ghostes laig.

Make um power of muscle and bone—

Come up Miny, hyuh's yo' own.

LIL and FURY (*softly*). Hyuh's yo' own.

FESS (*yelling*). I see what you adder now. You wants to ha'nt me. (*Cocking his gun*) But you ain't gwine do it. I'll blow yo' brains out wid dis here. (*He levels the gun at them*) I gi' you jest one minnit to git out. (*Old Queenie pays no attention to him, her head lifted up as if staring toward a vision.*)

LIL and FURY (*joyously*). Us see um now. Huh coming.

QUEENIE (*in loud exultation*). Coming!

FESS. Hyuh goes den, and dat's de las' o' you. I shoot de old black 'un fust.

LIL and FURY. Huh in de field out dere now.

QUEENIE (*throwing her hands up and down in the air*).
Yis, yis, I feel it.

FESS (*his face distorted with rage*). I shoot both o' dem eyes out. (*He pulls the trigger, but the hammer refuses to fall. He tries the other one.*) Dem domn hammers stuck. (*He raises the gun again and pulls savagely on the triggers. Old Queenie turns and looks at him with a low devilish laugh.*)

QUEENIE. Come on, Miny, hyuh's yo' own.

LIL and FURY. Hyuh's yo' own.

FESS (*with a shriek*). She done got dat gun—a spell on it! (*He throws the gun from him and whirls to his chair. Sitting down with his back to the women, he clasps his head between his knees, rocking and moaning.*) My haid done all gone slam to pieces. O, Lawd, have muhcy on me! (*He cowers in his seat.*)

LIL and FURY. Huh in de yard out dere now.

QUEENIE (*ecstatically*). Yis, yis, fetch her in. (*Calling loudly*) Supper, Miny! Come to yo' supper!

VONIE (*throwing her apron from her head and sitting up calm and straight*). Call her, call her, lemme see her onct mo'.

QUEENIE (*turning and looking through the door*). Look dere, look dere. Huh out dere at de well drawing water. (*The low rumble of a whirling windlass is heard.*)

FESS (*raising his head*). Listen at dat, listen at dat! (*Crouching down on the hearth*) Dat's a ha'nt at my well. (*He sits shivering with terror.*)

LIL and FURY. De ha'nts is drawing water at his well.

QUEENIE (*staring out in the deepening dusk*). De ya'd's full of 'em, all come back wid huh. Fess, you is a lost mem-buh. (*Reaching out her arms towards the night and pleading*) Come in hyuh Miny, come on. Call to huh, chillun. (*Breathlessly*) Call to huh.

LIL and FURY (*beating their heads against the table*). Heah us, Miny, heah us. Come in. De supper is waiting, de supper is fixed.

QUEENIE. Look! Look! She 'bout to tuhn back. Feel foh huh, Vonie. Huh gwine back in de field wid all dem

others, de little 'uns and de big 'uns. Dey gwine back to de swamps.

VONIE (*lifting up her voice in a wail*). Miny, Miny, come to yo po' muh dis night!

QUEENIE. Huh coming, huh coming in. (*Addressing the spectre.*) Dat's it, honey, dat's it, come on in. (*Her voice trembles and slobbers with eagerness, and she begins patting her hands softly together, keeping time with her foot on the floor.*)

VONIE (*screaming*). Dere she now! (*She sits petrified in her chair. A little ragged Negro girl with down-cast eyes comes quietly in at the door and seats herself at the table. She is about sixteen years old, with swelling breasts and a plump oval face. She begins eating food from the plate.*)

VONIE (*murmuring over and over*). Miny, Miny, is dat you, chile? Den you ain't daid, thank God. (*She stares at her with fascinated eyes.*) Fess, Fess, dere's Miny, come back to us!

FESS. Tain't nothing, tain't nothing. Don't you look at dat. (*Suddenly old Queenie begins to caper back and forth across the floor, breaking out into senseless ecstatic words.*)

QUEENIE (*as she capers*). Tibbity-bibbity, tchee-tchee-tchee— Tchee-tchee-tchee.

LIL and FURY (*falling on the floor before the little girl*). Purty little flower!

QUEENIE (*waving her arms aloft*). Lily o' de valley.

LIL and FURY (*making obeisance*). Little scrushed lily.

QUEENIE (*singing*). De rose o' Sharon.

LIL and FURY. Rose o' Sharon.

QUEENIE. Mean man pulled de little flower f'om its bed.

LIL and FURY. Mean man pulled.

QUEENIE. He hadder die.

LIL and FURY. Gut to die.

QUEENIE. Who wuh it, honey.

LIL and FURY. Who wuh it? (*The little girl continues eating her food, saying nothing.*)

QUEENIE (*crying out*). You, Fess Oxendine, look up hyuh and see yo' dawtuh!

FESS (*beginning to sob*). I cain't see huh, have muhcy on me!

QUEENIE. Look up, I tell you. (*She stretches out her hand and Fess slowly lifts his head from the floor.*)

FESS (*gasping*). Who dat? (*Joy breaking in his voice*) Why dat— Glory to God, dat little Miny come back! (*He staggers to his feet and goes towards the table.*) Den you ain't daid, thank de Lawd. Dat all a dream I had. Look at you and you so purty. Honey, come hyuh to me. (*He suddenly breaks into loud sobs.*) Thank de Lawd, thank de Lawd. (*As he approaches the table, the little girl backs away in terror and moves toward the door.*)

VONIE. Miny, Miny!

QUEENIE. Tell us who de man? (*Without lifting her head, the little girl nods at Fess.*) I knowed it, he de man whut ruint you and make you drownd yo'se'f. (*She reaches into the bowl, and a galvanic shock seems to run through her. She throws bits of the bowl's contents towards the door and the little girl suddenly disappears into the darkness.*)

VONIE (*starting up and wailing*). Whah she gone? Gi' huh back to me, gi' huh back!

QUEENIE (*throwing part of the mixture on Fess*). Hyuh de man!

FESS (*screaming and clawing at the back of his neck*). Let me loose! Who dat got me! (*He falls writhing and howling on the floor.*)

QUEENIE. Dere he, Vonie, he de man mix wid he own flesh.

VONIE (*breaking into a loud laugh*). Look at dat bad man lying dere cutting up on de flo'. Dat you, Fess, de old swamp buck?

FESS. Couldn't git huh out'n my mind. She so purty. (*Clawing his clothes from him*) Ooh—lemme loose! (*Vonie picks up the gun and suddenly fires both barrels into Fess's back. Then she flies out through the door calling pitifully after the little girl.*)

QUEENIE (*her face illumined*). De power come down to

us. (*She sprinkles Lil and Fury with the contents of the bowl and they rise from the floor with transfigured faces.*)

LIL and FURY. De power.

QUEENIE (*skipping and chanting*). Us re'ch and call and de daid do answer.

LIL and FURY (*beginning to skip with her*). Do answer.

QUEENIE (*weaving a pattern around Fess' dead body*). Hallelujah!

LIL and FURY (*beginning to pat their hands*). Hallelujah!! (*The dance quickens into a sharp staccato, as they sway and bow and chant.*)

QUEENIE. Us call and git answer.

LIL and FURY. Git answer.

QUEENIE. De supper fotch um.

LIL and FURY (*in ecstasy*). Fotch um down.

QUEENIE. Supper foh de daid.

LIL and FURY. Foh de daid.

(*The twins continue dancing around the body, as Old Queenie moves around the table raking her charms and fetishes into her bag. Their breath comes through their teeth in a hissing sound.*)

QUEENIE (*dancing towards the door*). Tibbity-bibbity-tchee-tchee—tchee.

LIL and FURY. Tchee—tchee—tchee. (*They disappear through the door, their gibbering dying in the night.*)

THE END

WALLACE GOULD

SIX POEMS

MOMENT MUSICALE

THIS morning I went out alone, to look for roses.
Late this morning, poppy lady, when the sun was high, the
 sunlight hot,
but long before the bedewed bushes had ceased their glis-
 tening,
and with my suddenly dreaming of the quite forgotten
 flowers,
I went out into the garden.
There I lingered.
There I searched.
I found no roses.
All were dead.
There was not even a withered petal.
The pericarps were already crimson.
It was too late to find the flowers I sought.
I knew the time for the seeds of thistles to begin their wan-
 dering on the winds.
I knew the time for the leaves of birches to begin their sid-
 ling to the ground.
I knew when roses begin to die.
I had forgotten, for I little care
whether I find the rosebush in full bloom,
or past the bloom, or shedding leaves, or bare.

Too well I know the time that roses die.
In latter June too many of them fall.
Though many straggle on, throughout July,
by latter August all are dead. Not all—
for years ago I found a lonely rose
alive in latter autumn. All the leaves
were dead, awaiting burial in the snows—
the climbing branches huddling in the eaves.

Yet what of that?
What of the rose?
Give me the poppy.
Only this morning,
three scarlet poppies by the garden path
unfurled their flameous crepe, archly, elegantly, graciously,
as if to greet
one who should come too late to find the rose.
Luring, like shecats fawning, at high spring—
gaudy, like painted paphians good to seek—
languorous, flushed, like bacchantes reveling—
they waited by the path as if to speak,
as if to murmur things that women say
who say things subtly, waiting by the way,
women like you,
O poppy lady.

Strum the guitar. The little gusts that fret
so lowly in the dense verandah vines,
teasing the fumes that leave your cigarette,
and uttering their melancholy whines,
rail at the movements of the nervous hand
pulling the dulcet fancies from the strings—
now olden ditties plain to understand,
and now capricious, incoherent things.
I feel that you are desperate. Every breath
forcing the smoke upon the fretful gusts,
wails, in a way, prophetic of a death,
now feared, now craved, of all the sweeter lusts
enervated by tedium. I know
what causes your evasive glances. So—

Strum the guitar. I like the verandah vines—
neglected and grown wild, but better thus—
a lattice having none but godly lines.
Pan built the lattice, let me say, for us.
Here, peering if we will beyond the screen,
together we may watch the ancient mime—
laughing, if such were possible, unseen.
Here may we kiss, perchance, some other time?

I cannot laugh at what goes on outside;
nor can I weep, nor thrill to what I see.
Can you? What is the gesture, word, or stride,
that is not too well known to you or me?
I have been satiated to the full.
You are enthralling. But the mime is dull.

Strum the guitar. The clearness of your eyes—
the very clearness of a tropic sea—
discloses portions of a wreck that lies
too deep for salvage or recovery,
a treasure-ship once laden to the prow
with gold, choice wines, rich fabrics, and a host
of rare diaphanous gems, but riding low—
too low, and doomed to end among the lost.
Perchance it foundered in a peaceful swell—
rudder or sail neglected for long dreams.
Or in a stormy trough, when lightning fell,
too quickly sundering the straining beams.
I wish that it had drifted, to this day.
I wish that it were yet to drift my way.

Strum the guitar.
I want no more of what men call their faith.
I want no more of what men call their hope.
Strum the guitar.
I want diversion—
sustenance for the beggared hours, famished, dying tot-
tering off to die;
not that they be rejuvenated; no—
but that they shall not perish as they go.
I loathe dead hours.
Strum the guitar.
Sustain one hour,
if only one.
Strum the guitar. Play, poppy lady, play
the tunes that go with waiting by the way.

ARS LONGA

(Metropolitan Museum)

Drunken Heracles

Did he steal away from great Omphale for a night,—
from female garb and perchance the leer of Hermaphro-
ditus?

Or is he leaving her forever?

Perchance he has just finished cleaning the Augean stables,
having begun his labor with a pardonable deep draught, to
end with one too many.

Perchance he has been back home, in old Thebes, after an
absence of many years,
and there has met with half forgotten friends,
companionable failures capable of devotion
that only men possess and many drinks make words of.
Perchance he imbibed for a reason all his own,—
a reason poisonous as the philtre of Nessus.
But he is surely drunk.

Good. But alone? A hero drunk and alone?

Should there not be a crowd of Thebans following him
beyond the gates?

Should there not be at least two friends to steady the reeling
hero?

Or two pretty flutegirls playing silly tunes,—
treading warily just behind the big bare man,
and pausing now and then for a titter, though losing a
note or two?

Surely there should be old Chiron to accompany, with a
train of fauns and timbrelplayers—

as no doubt there really is, to the mind of the tipsy man
himself—

a straggling train of fauns, timbrelplayers, slaves with am-
phorae running over,

voluptuous bacchantes fuddled and flushed, satyrs drooling,
all exultant,

all worshipful,—
 now of Dionysus,
 now of Heracles.
 All are there.
 No drunken man is ever alone.

Step as high as you will, Heracles, and wherever you may.
 Whoop, bellow, brag, to the sound of timbrel and flute, the
 praise of men or the giggle of gods.
 My countrymen would say that you disgrace yourself, es-
 pecially as a hero,
 and would squirm at the sight of your august bareness,
 for my countrymen are sexual sceptics, atheists even, who
 do not trust in their maker.
 But I should like to see our Washington come down the
 street in exactly your condition,
 followed by two pretty flappers strumming ukeleles
 and tittering with the orthodox among us.

Yet beware, Heracles. No drunken man is ever alone.
 Do not forget that of all companions, none is so insidious,
 vicious, dangerous,
 as memory.
 Beware of it,—
 for long ago you strangled two great snakes.

VITA BREVIS

1. *To Villon*

Did you hang by the neck until dead,
 your mouth agape and awry, and at one side of it your
 blackening tongue protruding?
 Did you cry out for mercy at the last? Or worse,
 did you confess to things that you did and even did not do?
 Or better, did you try to lie out of the affair?
 Did you wriggle and squirm at the stake?
 Were you put to death for thievery, or for writing poems?

Are you the wind, chilly, penetrative, sidling from behind
the tree nearby,
and stealing about my thighs, like a cold but practiced
hand groping for my purse?

I believe so.

I believe, moreover,
that even the night itself is apparitional,—
for many a night of my own has returned on me, a veritable apparition.

Is this the night on which you robbed the dead woman?
The aspects of the night are grizzly enough, surely: —
the wintry scuds, like glowering wraiths of rogues,
crowding together sullenly before the waning moon, and
obscuring it, as if to sinister purpose;
the naked branches and twigs, many entangled, many hor-
rent, all rising wildly against the lowery sky,
like the unkempt hair of wretches maddening in the dun-
geon;
the fitful snowfalls of latter evening,
stealthy of descent, and guilty of appearance when at rest
after a hurried covering up of footprints;
and looming against the snuggling white or the overhanging
gray,
the blurred shapes of unlighted structures, black with un-
lighted midnight, and all silent, like the deserted
streets:—
all such blending together, creating an hour for robbery
of the dead or the living either.
The scene might be ancient Paris itself,—

But look. There is a light, a solitary light,—
yonder, in the house of the parish priest,
who has just received his Christmas money—
from each of a thousand parishioners a dollar.
Look. It is beginning to snow again.
In the morning there will be no footprints.

Francois, if one were surely to be put to death,
why not rather for thievery than for writing poems,—
thus to get into Paradise that night?

2. To De Maupassant

You are said to possess the intellect of a gnat.
 I do not know who judged you thus. It was perchance a
 louse, precocious, ambitious, one of the many,
 which, crawling and swarming, and at present popular, are
 sure to infest
 remote and odorous places on the body of the Muse.
 I sometimes think that the Muse now bathes in deodorant
 rather than attar.
 Am I not right? Tell me. You should know better than I—
 you who are one of her chosen attendants.
 Am I not right in suspecting you of having seen her at
 the bath?

To my comprehensive Americans you seem too narrow of
 vision,
 too much concentrated on the essential,
 too much concerned with legitimate lust,—
 with the old, old triangle now called French,—
 much too reactive to the old, old animal manner
 to thrill my progressive countrymen, who are bound to lead
 the world in things unheard of,—
 with now a bridegroom fearing to enter the nuptial chamber,
 and walking all night long outside the house, alone, clench-
 ing his hands,
 or perchance for a month or even a year,
 living fearfully chaste with his wondering lady,
 enjoying with her a state of marital bundling,
 and pondering, like a scholar of the olden cloister, some
 such problem
 as how many angels could dance on the point of a needle.

You are lost to great prestige among my sagacious people,
 who have made another triangle all their own, one more
 practical, one that is lawfully moral,—
 father, mother, with suckling adopted in its fifteenth year,
 together a theorematic affair,
 the sex of the suckling chosen by its opposite of sex,

one of the two determining angles—
the larger in hunger or sheer will—
and the determined angle itself, a legally burning baby,
regarded as Sodom was by the subtle but sadly salted wife
of Lot.

All is over. All has been said of you that can ever be said,
to disparage,
unless perchance there is found some fatal billet-doux
that escaped the destructive hand of your wise and admir-
able mother,
or perchance are published the memoirs of one like the
Roosevelt woman, the American whose gross grace
you might have won by having used the horsewhip rather
than the tray,
or even by having shaved your face of that damnable French
moustache.
Was it not that very moustache that really drove you mad?

POSTSCRIPT: LETTER TO W. S.

A certain phrase in your last letter thrills me.
It is a playful phrase. Do you remember it —
“Your cats clambering over the walls of Paradise?”
I like your kindly whimsicality.

But I doubt that my little friends would ever clamber over
the walls.
Should the furry shades still eat, they might explore the
viny entanglements, perchance at dusk, to prey on the
drowsy bird or its nestling;
or they might frequent the top of the walls,
there to hunt the chipmunk—
for I dream of the old stone pasture walls of my half for-
gotten New England—
but I doubt that any one of my cats would descend at the
other side,
even to go in search of kindly whimsicality.

My cats and I are obviously happy together, on our earthly
 acres,
but ours is not a god who herds his chosen in a pasture.

I do not want to enter Paradise.
I do not like its plan, its personnel.
But, should I be forced to live through another existence,
I should aspire to one great happiness,—
that of pausing outside the walls,
not by the gates,
nor within hearing of the loud laudations,
but at a spot remote from all such sounds,
and from the presence of dogs, which I hope would enter
 with their faithful masters.
There, and alone, I should raise my voice in the old call
that had resounded about our acres, and beyond them,
 echoing, now by day, now by night,
thrilling me with a sound that had brought my little friends
scampering homeward in all directions,
and all the while calling to me in their fashion.
There I should stand, calling, waiting for all to come—
all save those that died too young to remember the call.

Many are dead. Mine is the hand that poured each vial
 of mercy.
I hope that mine alone will be the hand to kill the rest.
As the pioneer of the prairie killed the helpless of his heart,
 at hearing the yell of the triumphant savage,
so shall I kill my own.
I shall leave none behind,
for well I know the resultant fate of which my little friends
 know nothing.

But at the walls of Paradise I should call my cats together.
Greetings over, I should turn away, obviously happy, to
 wander forever with my little friends—
for I know that they would follow me, obviously happy, as
 they had followed me about our earthly acres.
If such as I have envisioned were to be our common fate,
I know that my cats would scorn the very walls of Paradise.

LAURELS

A modern sage who tells the long tale of the wanton, from
the day of Tamar to that of Madame,
asserts, in the pages of a comprehensive treatise,—

“It is a well known circumstance
that at certain periods
large numbers of courtesans from New York, Boston, and
other cities,
emigrate southward.”

I am glad to know the fact.

I am thrilled.

And what is more thrilling than the thought of a people
moving toward a chosen land,
or even moving about in freedom?

Even now,

I see innumerable faces set toward various horizons, the eyes
alight with thoughts of change.

I hear innumerable voices sounding all at once,—

shouting, commanding, admonishing, exhorting, renouncing,
cursing, muttering, wailing, murmuring, singing,—
and together with the voices, and all at once, trumpets blar-
ing, drums mustering, weapons clanking, feet scuffling,
hoofs clattering, wheels rattling, capstans creaking.

I see innumerable horses in caparison, innumerable camels
laden with big bales, innumerable ships with mainsails
bulging.

I see innumerable people moving all together,—

marching, jostling, stalking, cowering, lagging, plodding,
sitting erect in saddles, standing erect in chariots, lean-
ing one on another, bending their backs to burdens,

There is a host approaching the Red Sea, now entering
the sea through a cleft in its waters, and now emerging
from it, to wander for years in a wilderness.

There is a horde appearing before the gates of Prague,—
a swarthy people, obsequious, mysterious, bejeweled,—

now to knock at the gates, to bow low, to flatter, and to be admitted with caution, with wonderment.

There is a group in gray, all with gray concepts, now embarking at Leyden, now sailing the Atlantic, and now disembarking at Plymouth, there to smear a continent with gray.

I should like to make the songs of an exodus.
But not of such peoples would I ever sing.

For now,

I hear the clinking of innumerable stoppers to perfumery bottles,

the popping of innumerable corks and caps;

and together with the scents of Chypre, Cashmere Bouquet, Narcisse de Chine,

there come to me wavering whiffs of Cognac, Wilson, Sterling, mountain dew, and of course hot gin,

all blending with the aromas of Helmar, Melachrino, Fatima.

There is an April shower of Hogarth lines, a blizzard of Chantilly, a typhoon of Hudnut.

I hear innumerable voices sounding all at once,—

chattering, cooing, tittering, shrilling, sighing, murmuring, pleading, sobbing, humming jazz, singing love songs.

I hear the pattering of innumerable satined feet, and of little hands that smooth out linen to be packed away for future use.

I see innumerable porcelain faces beaming out from depths of fox, sable, ermine, seal, beaver.

I hear a thunder of thuds echoing about the North, at the closing of innumerable lids of trunks.

I hear another thunder of thuds, echoing likewise, at the closing of the doors of innumerable limousines.

And now,

I am going to Madame.

I am going to ask Madame to take me with her, that I may make the songs

for this movement of lovely beings southward bound.

APHRODITE

Zeus married me to Hephaestus. I was fresh from Cyprus, a stranger at Olympus, marriageable, but unacquainted.

I was not timid. I was wary.

I was not bold. I was sure of myself.

I ignored no wheedler, scorned no aspirant, repulsed no aggressor, yet responded with naught save parry of word or gesture—

at least for a little while, that I might learn the lay—

and to none exclusively, but to all, sportively, poiselessly, smiling on each warm want, but not encouraging it to grow.

There was Apollo, intuitive, perceptive, thrillingly impetuous, adorably jealous, later a kindly brother in beauty.

There was Hermes, unscrupulous, incorrigible, forcefully charming, surpassingly obliging, supremely swift of accomplishment.

There was Helios, glorious, mighty, but with little save glory and might to recommend him.

Not at all clever at love, he was too aggressive, the only aggressor on whom I did not smile.

But there was Ares, irascible, unmanageable, misunderstood by all save me. For me there was always Ares.

There was even Zeus himself. But, like Helios, he was not clever at love. He was rather silly, for one of his age, his power, his potency, his command.

He was conceited.

He was a bore.

I found him repellent even. But I dissembled, for Zeus is Zeus.

I knew that he must be handled with consummate tact—not so much because of himself as because of Hera, poor wifely Hera, grim, hungry, jealous, virtuously vengeful,

though not as yet suspicious of me.

Hera never once uttered my name with a sneer. The gods wondered.

Not always in secret, and never abashed, the august pair wrangled, wrangled continually, by divine right,

yet never once referred to my presence at Olympus.

But Zeus grew ardent.

He became dangerous.

I was beginning to lose my wits, when Hera came to me
worriedly, wanting to borrow my Cyprian girdle.

So glad was I that I nearly laughed in her face.

I lent the girdle graciously, but with almost suppliant admonition.

I allowed her to think that I did her a favor.

I was glad to be rid of her stupid husband.

I never used the Cyprian trapping. I did not need it.

I was sure that the girdle worked its charm on Zeus, for
early next morning,

Hera returned the girdle by Hermes, dear dashing Hermes,
and for a day, a whole day, the august pair wrangled none
whatever,

but smiled comprehensively, one on the other.

Hermes and I smiled also, one on the other, and comprehensively,

and for a long time all went merrily at Olympus, with feasting and reveling in my honor.

But Zeus found out the affair of the girdle. Hera told him,
in true matrimonial fashion, during a wrangle

caused by her having discovered him in disguise, on earth.

Zeus was piqued. He sulked. He stalked. He grew evasive,
haughty, conspicuously moral,

and made a ruling that all gods must marry.

He gave me to Hephaestus, the imperfect, the clumsy, the
morose, begotten of Hera during a wrangle,

and hurled by her into Erebus, where I wish he had remained.

Zeus called him back to Olympus, not only to punish me,
but to annoy Hera.

Extolling the utilitarian aesthete, he gave him place, made
useful beauty the fashion of the day.

Sure of myself, I knew that I could displace all this, and
even nullify the ruling. I moved about serenely.

Hera fumed, raged. Wrangling rose anew, louder than
ever before, and more protracted.

The gods remonstrated, clamored, all save Helios.
But Zeus persisted. It mattered little,
for nothing ever matters much to me.
I took Hephaestus and said nothing.
I said very little to Hephaestus.
I ignored him.
I almost forgot him.
He went to sisterly Pallas for intellectual consolation.
He limped about with complaints of my being cold. Ares
told me. We laughed together.
Hermaphroditus was born. There was much consternation,
more pondering, and not a little gossip.
Hephaestus frowned. I smiled. I proclaimed to all Olympus
that Hermaphroditus was mine by my own inspired husband,
and the result of his searching for new forms of expression.
I glimpsed a smile in the eye of Apollo, the delightfully
alert, the amusingly aware, the subtly scornful of all
save me.
I carried the day.
I hate deformity.
I hate anvils.
I hate toilers and their perspiration.
I hate as beautifully as I love.
I hated Hephaestus.

But there was Ares. There was always Ares.
Of all Olympians he was the very first that I ever looked on.
I beheld him before I ever came to Olympus.
I swept along the Aegean. I came to the Peloponnesus.
I noted commotion among mortals.
I saw the defiant arrayed against the threatening.
I saw the glitter of upraised weapons.
I heard loud utterances of hate.
I startled. I saw divinity appearing in the north, and
approaching swiftly, now drawing near—
a virile youth in armor, his hard muscles menacingly straining;
ing;

his countenance livid with omnipotent rage, and drawn,
though not distorted;

his eyes bloodshot, ecstatically savage, impassably intent;
his lips exquisitely firm, parted slightly with oblivious excitement. It was Ares.

He wore his metal with as much ease as I my fabric.

He seemed all metal, his very flesh metallic, symmetrically cast,

his glance the glare of a burnished blade.

He glanced at me. I gasped. I was faint with the sight of him. I reeled.

I would have fallen under his feet.

I would have let him trample me.

But he passed by without pausing.

He glanced at me over his shoulder. I thrilled.

He turned away. He uttered a call to the armies.

I also turned away. I went radiant to Olympus.

I found the gods weary of themselves. I found them frustrated.

I found no love at Olympus. I found lust, creative, prodigal, but purposeless,

its desires ephemeral, its motives gross, and itself turning inverse for want of vision. Olympus wavered.

I came radiant with immortal incentive.

I came serene with immutable motive.

I brought love to Olympus. I brought kisses.

I kissed Ares first. I had fully intended to do so.

But he was like no other god. He was hard of approach—for he was hated, and was blindly cynical. He, too, hated.

He accepted hate naively, rather than love. He was faithful to his mission.

He never hated me, however, but he seemed confused, or wary, or obtuse even,

for with hate dominant, rather than love, and thoughts of destruction rather than those of creation,

he may likely have never known lust. I had reason to think him virgin.

But the day came, ah, the day that I made the metal mellow.

The gods were all assembled, to hear old grievances vented—
there were no new ones, now, nor any hope of such—
and among the old ones that of Ares and Apollo, mutually
jealous.

Apollo, like a spoiled child, had flaunted the aegis. Ares
protested.

They met before the throne of Zeus. Apollo argued ably.
Ares uttered vehemently, denounced the other, accused him
of aspiring to the very throne.

I feared for Apollo.

I stepped forward.

I took the face of the accuser in my hands, gently, but
firmly.

I raised myself on tiptoe, and just as the lips opened to
accuse further,

I placed my own against them, pressed them, leaving them
open but helpless, helpless as metal itself.

They were cold as metal. The flesh, as if with alarm,
turned ghastly, but now instantly crimson, and now ghastly
again.

I withdrew my lips with a snap, a sounding snap.

The gods, all the while speechless, now sniggered.

Ares, all the while speechless, all the while rigid, motion-
less,

raised his arms to push me off. For some reason he did not
do so,

but now raised them over his head, uttered a loud howl of
rage, and disappeared, running.

Apollo laughed. I ran to him. I kissed him, too. The gods
marveled. They were silenced.

I ran up the steps to the throne. I ran behind it. I leaned
forward.

I kissed Zeus on the cheek. The gods gasped. Hera glow-
ered.

I ran down the steps, and off, and after Ares.

I found him bowed with shame of what he thought was de-
feat. He cursed me. I stood unmoved.

He accused me of having defeated him for the sake of
Apollo. He uttered hate. I smiled.

I kissed him. He was obdurate.
I placed my head at his heart and my arms about him.
I felt the flesh turn cold. I felt it wince.
I felt the great hands clutch me, to repel me—
felt them relax and steal about me, and the great arms en-
fold me, cautiously,
as if discovering some new thing. I raised my face.
I saw the countenance pale, and now flush, and now pale
again. The head sank.
I closed my eyes. I felt the metallic lips touch mine, cau-
tiously, fumblingly.
I let them fumble till they found themselves at rest,
cradled for the first time, the divine orphans, but not too
late,
there to nestle luxuriously and long, though too content for
slumber. From that hour there was always Ares.

The gods gossiped, looked askance, mentioned faulty taste,
or whispered folly.
Zeus was moody, but made no comment. Hephaestus watched
us,
meanwhile neglecting the forge, and spending much time
with Pallas,
or trying to make his golden maidens palpitate. He made
vague threats.
I discovered that Helios was a spy for Hephaestus. I told
Ares. I laughed at Helios.
But one day, while Ares and I were sitting together by the
sea,
reclining in the folds of a net that was dry and warm, ob-
viously new, strangely soft of fiber,
Helios passed by, inscrutable, pretending not to see us. I
grew uneasy. Suddenly, swiftly,
there appeared an arm of enormous power. It darted over
us.
A hand of enormous power clutched at the net, drew it
about us, raised us in the air.
Hephaestus stood over us, holding us suspended. He howled
with glee.

Holding us high, he went howling to Olympus.
Ares cursed, kicked, struggled, but to no avail.
I lay quiet, lowly imploring Ares to be quiet.
Hephaestus held us up to the gaze of the gods. The gods
laughed loud and long.
Hephaestus howled hysterically. Ares moaned. I lay still.
Hephaestus dropped us. Ares struggled free. He sprang
at Hephaestus. I sprang to my feet.
I touched the arm of Ares, barely touched it. He stood still,
silent, but quivering. He glared.
I faced Hephaestus. I looked straight at him. I tittered.
I laughed him to scorn.
I silenced him. I silenced the gods. Not a word did I utter,
but took Ares by the hand, gently, and led him to the
throne.
I went not as a penitent. I did not kneel,
but looked unflinchingly at the godhead. There was no
sound,
until, with a smile beaming on the countenance of the god-
head,
there burst from him a gusty laugh, a detonation somewhat
like the sound of his own thunder,
the noise augmented by the laughter of the other gods, the
greater, the lesser—
the Eumenides, the Musae, the Moirae. Even Atropos
laughed.
All save Hephaestus laughed. Hephaestus stood confused.
He turned, confused, and left Olympus.
Not a word was uttered. Not a word was said of the affair
thereafter.
The kiss from behind the throne had made me queen of
Olympus.

I loved no god save Ares. But Ceres once remarked in my
presence, perchance insidiously,
that even the richest soil needs cultivation, must have it,
moreover,
if harvesting would be made worthwhile. She was always
trite.

But I knew that my love must be overturned, even to the leer
of Helios.

I told Ares a secret. At the time that Hera returned the
girdle by Hermes,

Ares was captive, held by the Aloidæ. When Hermes
brought the girdle to me,

I bribed him to rescue Ares. I let him name his price.

He stole the girdle for another bribe. I let him have the
girdle.

But he rescued Ares. I told Ares all.

Ares grew livid. He was silent. He left me. I pondered.

I was not so sure of myself. I wept. I went to earth. I fled
from Ares.

I had heard that the humble saw more clearly.

I had heard that the lowly were more grateful.

I sought the love of mortals. There was Anchises, beautiful
as Apollo.

His bearing was that of Ares. His stature was that of Ares.

His youth was mature. His flesh was ripe with emotion.

His muscles were glossy, darkening here and there to
a glossy purple.

Surely he was desirable. I was not sure that he was mortal.

But he was. He was frankly afraid of accepting my love.

I reassured him.

I gave him divine love. He returned it divinely.

Not even now was I sure that he was mortal.

But he was. To other men he told the tale of my indiscre-
tion.

I was about to change him into an ass, a real ass, when Zeus
struck him blind.

I went to the summit of Ida. I wafted a kiss to Olympus.

Anchises feared, but so did Adonis. Fear, the fear that I
found on earth,

was given to mortals before my coming to Olympus, im-
parted sagaciously, infused omnividently,

by altruistic Themis, profound Themis, who thought of
balancing courage—

and perchance of keeping mortals themselves in their place.
Fear of the gods was well, and worked well, and fear of one
another not less well,
but the force became rampant, a veritable spotted plague,
omnivorous, indiscriminate, unmanageable, now turning
inward,
eating at all qualities alike, and assuming various aspects,
courage among them,
with now wisdom, now innocence, and now inveterate virtue,
as in Adonis, displaying symptoms branding mortals as
mere chattels,
a cosmic helotry, sickly, segregated from even the least of
lesser gods.
Fear in gods gave balance. Fear in mortals mocked the
weight, ignored the inferior resistance.
Fear was almost fatal to me. I infused new force into
mortals.
But fear was already too deeply seated, enervating the force
I gave, or repressing it, or changing its aspect.
Anchises knew that he feared. Adonis thought that he
repulsed me.
Adonis was even more beautiful than Anchises, even more
virile,
at once virile and virgin, amusingly desirable, sadly desir-
able. He was pitifully transformed.
I cried out in despair. I cried out for one who should know
no fear.
Out of the air there suddenly charged a wild boar. It
lunged at Adonis.
I shuddered. I implored Adonis to flee. But Adonis gave
battle.
He wounded the boar. I closed my eyes. I heard the strug-
gle of body against body.
I heard a porcine shriek. I heard a human cry, the cry of
Adonis.
I opened my eyes. I saw Adonis dead, mutilated, robed in
his own blood, and masked thus, a stranger.
I saw Ares standing over Adonis, Ares himself bleeding.
The boar had vanished.

I ignored Ares. I gazed on Adonis. I wept. I wept long.
I wept in the arms of Ares.

Do you know the Ares of the Ludovici? That is he. That
is Ares—

at ease, sitting as now he often sat, but only when alone
with me.

It was the hour that Helios chose for his daily leer from
Ogygia.

Ares was lost in dreams, but he gazed unwaveringly at
Helios,

and perchance obliviously, while about his feet our baby
played,

myself reclining nearby, dreaming, gazing down on earth,
but seeing nothing there,

and thinking neither of Hellas nor Olympus, but only of
Ares, rash Ares,

the genius of rash youth, at rest only to dream of rashness,
and yet surely at rest,

his gentleness transfigured as I had often seen it, I
alone.

There was no sound save the cooing of Eros at the feet of
his father.

I shall never forget the spell, a momentous spell, much too
unusual to last long,

and long afterwards, at the same hour, once when I was
alone and lonely,

I divulged to a lonely suppliant with impotent chisel and
impassive stone,

the concept of Ares in repose, the secret of gentle Ares.

But Ares spoke. He was already weary of silence. He was
weary of rest.

He had been quiet too long. He wanted excitement. He
wanted action.

He longed for the vented hatred of men for men, the ensuing
clash, the ecstatic din,

the uproar of the rash, the outcry of the brave, the blood
of the best.

He said that his fanes were empty, his attributes ridiculed.

He was ignored.

He wanted years and years of strife. He should never grow tired of battle.

I sent Eros away. I arose. I stood before Ares, my flameous hair

matching the jealous flush of Helios leering from Ogygia, and myself draped only with the streaming strands, but draped to my feet,

as if drenched with the liquid gold of Hephaestus tinged with the red of the rashest blood.

I raised my arms toward Ares. I laughed. I said to him, carelessly,—

“Kiss me. Kiss me many times, and for each time there shall be a year of war.”

Ares startled. He sprang at me, raised me in his arms. I giggled. I squirmed.

There were nine kisses daringly placed, and all to my satisfaction, all properly,

but the tenth was so daring, so daringly placed, and so forcefully,

that I uttered a scream, a giggling scream, and kicked, and escaped him,

and fled, and ran to the feet of Zeus and sat there, laughing.

I was safe. But Zeus apparently took no notice. He talked with Themis, his real brains,

and the two busybodies conversed in mutters, with many a sapient squint and shake of head,

as frequently they did, too frequently, and only to stir up mortals.

They always bored me. I never listened. Now I arose to go my way,

and was arranging my hair, when I heard Themis remark, prescient Themis,—

“Where is old Eris, elsewhere making trouble? Give it to Eris,

She need not be invited, but she would delight in casting the apple among them.
She would delight in looking in on the feast, on us once more.
Give it to her."

The words meant nothing. I wound up my hair, hastily,
and departed,
to array myself for the feast that night, the fatal feast of
Peleus and Thetis.
It was the very night of their marriage. I had forgotten it.
I must hasten.
I called for the Graces. I called for golden fabric, limp,
lustrous.
I called for armlets of red gold. I called for pearls.
I became absorbed in myself. But there recurred to me
the words,

"Give it to Eris. She would delight in casting it among
them."

I chanted the words. I began to muse. I went musing to
the feast.
All Olympus went to the feast, all save Eris, who was not
invited.
The night waned, but not the surge of dance and proces-
sional, the noise of the revelous.
Hebe poured. All grew hilarious, even Pallas, even Hera.
But just as Helios roused himself to depart, and yawned
nearby, and so loudly
that I lost the point of a new Corinthian pun as told by
Silenus,
there was a hush. I glanced up. I saw grim Eris in dun
garb.
She held high an apple of gold. She stood in a farther
doorway. She stood mute.
She threw the apple. She turned away. She left us. I was
curious. I arose.
Hermes caught the apple. He ran with it to Zeus, reading
as he ran

a raised inscription burnished brightly, the work of Hephaestus.

He laughed loudly. Holding the apple up to view, he cried out,—

“For the fairest among you.”

He gave the apple to Zeus. I knew that I alone should have it.

Hera claimed it. I knew that I must possess it.

Pallas claimed it. I knew that I should win it.

I now demanded the apple. Zeus was about to give it to me, when Themis, equitable Themis, touched the arm that extended the fruit. The arm intuitively drew back.

I was about to rage. I drew myself to full height.

I raised my hands to my hair to pull it. I drew all my heat to my eyes.

I glared, glared at the very godhead. I was about to say things all quite new to Olympus.

But Themis suddenly spoke, resourceful Themis. She said, in leisurely manner, equable manner,—

“In Troas may be found the rightful judge.

He is a shepherd, yet a son of Priam—

unknown to Priam, and not knowing him—

young Paris, who, in childhood, was exposed

on Ida, thus to die, and by his mother,

Hecuba, who had heard it prophesied

that he, grown up, should end the reign of Priam.

There he was rescued. There he lives today.

He is a virile rake, forever restive,

hating his lot, and weary of his sheep,

he knows not why, and now vaguely aspiring

to symbols other than the pipe and crook,

and women other than Ionian trulls—

lately so popular with certain gods.

He lives in visions of the better flesh

moving beyond his reach, defying him.

Visions have now become with him an art.

He is an able critic of the fair.
Is it not therefore well to let him judge
to whom this fruit belongs? Give him the vision
of these three lovely claimants. Let him judge.
If not the vision, then the lovely three
themselves appearing. Let the shepherd judge."

The day of the judgment was chilly. Boreas raved. Helios drowsed.

Hera was clothed with heavy fabric of sunny blue. Her jewels were sapphires. She was comely.

Pallas was clothed with heavy fabric of somber gray, and, I was sure,

wore heavy garments under the gray, wore them naïvely, to keep her warm, for she was forever complaining of cold. Her short and wiry hair hung loose, from beneath the helmet that she always wore, even in bed,

but I arranged mine carefully, with ivory fillets, as Psyche did long afterwards, in imitation of me.

I knew that men were myriad who disliked to see our hair hang loose. I risked nothing.

I wore no jewels save those of a pendant hanging half way to my feet, a gift from Hephaestus. I wore an anklet, one of gold.

I wore the gauze that I wore when I came to Olympus, green, the deeper green of my own deep sea.

I was ready. I worried over my promise to Ares of ten years of war.

I stood worrying when the summons came from Hermes.

Hermes conducted us to the heights of Ida. Pallas and Hera talked all the while of problem or abstraction. I was silent. I was troubled.

But at length I spoke with Hermes, divertive Hermes, swift of wit,

and together we went laughingly to Ida. Pallas and Hera followed.

Paris was there. I liked his looks. His sheepskin was a mockery.

He sat wearily. His eyes were closed, his pipes beside him.

He muttered,
calling out lowly for else than visions. We stood before him.

Hera sidled close,
conscious of precedence, jealous of such, ingenuously jealous.
She towered.

She assumed the matronly poise, as if to impress a shepherd.
Pallas, her countenance serious, stood next. She stood erect.
She held an open scroll, as if to interest a shepherd.

Both posed. But I, standing last, and rather behind the
others,

merely stood there, I do not remember how. Paris opened
his eyes.

He sprang to his feet. He stood aghast. But Hermes, complaisant Hermes,
addressed him, explained, instructed, gave him the golden
apple.

Paris calmed. He read the inscription. He gazed. He
faltered.

I stepped into view. But as I did so, Hera, speaking hurriedly,

offered a bribe of power over men. Paris was speechless.

I had not thought of bribery, but now that such was the
order,

I determined on a thing to offer. I rose to an inspiration.

I remembered a prayer from the soul of rapturous Helen of
Sparta, lonely Helen,

the old lone cry for a thrill of love. Pallas was already
speaking,

offering wisdom and martial renown. Paris was glancing
at me.

With not a moment to lose, I parted my lips to speak. As I
did so,

Hermes snatched at the pendant. But his dexterous fingers
failed him. Shamed, exasperated,

he pulled at my only garment, pulled it loose and fled with
it, fled laughingly, swiftly,

swiftly as never before. The pendant was now my raiment.

I was sure of myself. I laughed. I played with the pendant.

I knew that the apple was mine. I reached out to receive it. Paris sank on his knees, but as he sank down, gaping, moaning, dropping the apple at my feet,

I promised to him the fairest of women. I promised her not as a bribe.

I no longer thought of a bribe, for the apple was mine already.

I thought of the prophecy made of Paris. I thought of my other promise, my promise to Ares.

War, there must be war. There would surely be war over Helen.

War, there would soon be war. My promise to Ares would be fulfilled—

and yet not completely, for there must be ten full years of war.

Troas, Hellas, Olympus, all alike were already preparing.

Hephaestus toiled at the forge. Ares fretted. Pallas planned.

All discussed the duration. I mentioned a decade. But Themis, rational Themis,

remarked that I always wanted too much, deplored my capricious greed.

I went to Zeus. I entreated him for ten long years of mortal conflict.

I kissed him. He only laughed. I grew frantic. I groveled.

I took his face in my hands. He remarked that my fingers were soft and warm.

I beseeched him for a year of war for each of my ten warm fingers.

He was kindly, but he put me off. I went away in despair. I wept.

I worried myself wan. I seemed no longer queen of Olympus.

But I said no more. I waited despairfully. One night, late, when Olympus slept, and when even I was disrobing, and was letting down my hair—

having dismissed the Graces, that I might be alone, to think—

I heard voices. Themis and Zeus were drawing near, consulting in secret.

I reclined. I lay motionless. I heard them arguing, each intently—

Themis for five years of war, but Zeus, strangely, for ten. I thrilled to a desperate thought. I startled. I drew my green about me.

The omniscient pair approached my door. I held my breath.

I stared out into the darkness, between the curtains not yet closed,

and, as the pair passed by, I saw Zeus glancing in at me, attracted perchance by the flare of all my many lamps.

Lowering my head, lowering it lazily, I met his glance. I peered out through my hair, which, disheveled,

hung to the floor and lay there, curling, lazily even, to the fancy,

much like many a golden serpent, gorged. The eyes of the godhead glittered.

I made a wild smile on my wan face. I raised my hands, quickly, saucily, with palms outward, fingers extended, all ten.

I closed my fingers on my palms, opened them, all ten, quickly,

and lay there smiling wildly, with fingers extended, spreading wide.

The eyes of the godhead glittered. The eyes of the godhead widened.

He turned away to argue with Themis, discernful Themis, who had not seen,

and now to dispute with her. I remained motionless. I breathed lowly.

Both passed on. They began to wrangle. But soon there resounded through the darkness, thunderously,

the voice of Zeus, exclaiming decisively,—

“Ten. Ten. There shall be ten years of war.”

ERNEST HEMINGWAY

AN ALPINE IDYLL

It was hot coming down into the valley even in the early morning. The sun melted the snow from the skis we were carrying and dried the wood. It was spring in the valley but the sun was very hot. We came along the road into Galtur carrying our skis and rucksacks. As we passed the churchyard a burial was just over. I said, "Grüss Gott," to the priest as he walked past us coming out of the churchyard. The priest bowed.

"It's funny a priest never speaks to you," John said.

"You'd think they'd like you to say Grüss Gott."

"They never answer," John said.

We stopped in the road and watched the sexton shoveling in the new earth. A peasant with a black beard and high leather boots stood beside the grave. The sexton stopped shoveling and straightened his back. The peasant in the high boots took the spade from the sexton and went on filling in the grave—spreading the earth evenly as a man spreading manure in a garden. In the bright May morning the grave filling looked unreal. I could not imagine anyone being dead.

"Imagine being buried on a day like this," I said to John.

"I wouldn't like it."

"Well," I said, "we don't have to do it."

We went on up the road past the houses of the town to the inn. We had been ski-ing in the Silvretta for a month, and it was good to be down in the valley. In the Silvretta the ski-ing had been all right, but it was spring ski-ing, the snow was good only in the early morning and again in the evening. The rest of the time it was spoiled by the sun. We were both tired of the sun. You could not get away from the sun. The only shadows were made by rocks or by the hut that was built under the protection of a rock beside a glacier, and in the shade the sweat froze in your under-

clothing. You could not sit outside the hut without dark glasses. It was pleasant to be burned black but the sun had been very tiring. You could not rest in it. I was glad to be down away from snow. It was too late in the spring to be up in the Silvretta. I was a little tired of ski-ing. We had stayed too long. I could taste the snow water we had been drinking melted off the tin roof of the hut. The taste was a part of the way I felt about ski-ing. I was glad there were other things beside ski-ing, and I was glad to be down away from the unnatural high mountain spring into this May morning in the valley.

The innkeeper sat on the porch of the inn, his chair tipped back against the wall. Beside him sat the cook.

"Ski-heil!" said the innkeeper.

"Heil!" we said and leaned the skis against the wall and took off our packs.

"How was it up above?" asked the innkeeper.

"Schön. A little too much sun."

"Yes. There's too much sun this time of year."

The cook sat on in his chair. The innkeeper went in with us and unlocked his office and brought out our mail. There was a bundle of letters and some papers.

"Let's get some beer," John said.

"Good. We'll drink it inside."

The proprietor brought two bottles and we drank them while we read the letters.

"We better have some more beer," John said. A girl brought it this time. She smiled as she opened the bottles.

"Many letters," she said.

"Yes. Many."

"Prosit," she said and went out with the empty bottles.

"I'd forgotten what beer tasted like."

"I hadn't," John said. "Up in the hut I used to think about it a lot."

"Well," I said, "we've got it now."

"You oughtn't to ever do anything too long."

"No. We were up there too long."

"Too damn long," John said. "It's no good doing a thing too long."

The sun came through the open window and shone through the beer bottles on the table. The bottles were half full. There was a little froth on the beer in the bottles, not much because it was very cold. It collared up when you poured it into the tall glasses. I looked out of the open window at the white road. The trees beside the road were dusty. Beyond was a green field and a stream. There were trees along the stream and a mill with a water wheel. Through the open side of the mill I saw a long log and a saw in it rising and falling. No one seemed to be tending it. There were four crows walking in the green field. One crow sat in a tree watching. Outside on the porch the cook got off his chair and passed into the hall that led back into the kitchen. Inside the sunlight shone through the empty glasses on the table. John was leaning forward with his head on his arms.

Through the window I saw two men come up the front steps. They came into the drinking room. One was the bearded peasant in the high boots. The other was the sexton. They sat down at the table under the window. The girl came in and stood by their table. The peasant did not seem to see her. He sat with his hands on the table. He wore his old army clothes. There were patches on the elbows.

"What will it be?" asked the sexton. The peasant did not pay any attention.

"What will you drink?"

"Schnapps," the peasant said.

"And a quarter litre of red wine," the sexton told the girl.

The girl brought the drinks and the peasant drank the schnapps. He looked out of the window. The sexton watched him. John had his head forward on the table. He was asleep.

The innkeeper came in and went over to the table. He spoke in dialect and the sexton answered him. The peasant looked out of the window. The innkeeper went out of the room. The peasant stood up. He took a folded ten thousand kronen note out of a leather pocket-book and unfolded it. The girl came up.

"Alles?" she asked.

"Alles," he said.

"Let me buy the wine," the sexton said.

"Alles," the peasant repeated to the girl. She put her hand in the pocket of her apron, brought it out full of coins and counted out the change. The peasant went out the door. As soon as he was gone the innkeeper came into the room again and spoke to the sexton. He sat down at the table. They talked in dialect. The sexton was amused. The innkeeper was disgusted. The sexton stood up from the table. He was a little man with a mustache. He leaned out of the window and looked up the road.

"There he goes in," he said.

"In the Löwen?"

"Ja."

They talked again and then the innkeeper came over to our table. The innkeeper was a tall man and old. He looked at John asleep.

"He's pretty tired."

"Yes, we were up early."

"Will you want to eat soon?"

"Any time," I said. "What is there to eat?"

"Anything you want. The girl will bring the eating card."

The girl brought the menu. John woke up. The menu was written in ink on a card and the card slipped into a wooden paddle.

"There's the speise-karte," I said to John. He looked at it. He was still sleepy.

"Won't you have a drink with us?" I asked the innkeeper.

He sat down. "Those peasants are beasts," said the innkeeper.

"We saw that one at a funeral coming into town."

"That was his wife."

"Oh."

"He's a beast. All these peasants are beasts."

"How do you mean?"

"You wouldn't believe it. You wouldn't believe what just happened about that one."

"Tell me."

"You wouldn't believe it." The innkeeper spoke to the sexton. "Franz, come over here." The sexton came bringing his little bottle of wine and his glass.

"The gentlemen are just come down from the Wiesbaden-erhutte," the innkeeper said. We shook hands.

"What will you drink?" I asked.

"Nothing," Franz shook his finger.

"Another quarter litre?"

"All right."

"Do you understand dialect?" the innkeeper asked.

"No."

"What's it all about?" John asked.

"He's going to tell us about the peasant we saw filling the grave coming into town."

"I can't understand it anyway," John said. "It goes too fast for me."

"That peasant," the innkeeper said, "to-day he brought his wife in to be buried. She died last November."

"December," said the sexton.

"That makes nothing. She died last December then, and he notified the commune."

"December eighteenth," said the sexton.

"Anyway he couldn't bring her over to be buried until the snow was gone."

"He lives on the other side of the Paznaun," said the sexton. "But he belongs to this parish."

"He couldn't bring her out at all?" I asked.

"No. He can only come from where he lives on skis until the snow melts. So to-day he brought her in to be buried and the priest, when he looked at her face, didn't want to bury her. You go on and tell it," he said to the sexton. "Speak German, not dialect."

"It was very funny with the priest," said the sexton. "In the report to the commune she died of heart trouble. We knew she had heart trouble here. She used to faint in church sometimes. She did not come for a long time. She wasn't strong to climb. When the priest uncovered her face he asked Olz, 'Did your wife suffer much?' 'No' said

Olz. "When I came in the house she was dead across the bed."

"The priest looked at her again. He didn't like it.

"How did her face get that way?"

"I don't know," Olz said.

"You'd better find out," the priest said, and put the blanket back. Olz didn't say anything. The priest looked at him. Olz looked back at the priest. "You want to know?"

"I must know," the priest said."

"This is where it's good," the innkeeper said. "Listen to this. Go on Franz."

"Well," said Olz, "When she died I made the report to the commune and I put her in the shed across the top of the big wood. When I started to use the big wood she was stiff and I put her up against the wall. Her mouth was open and when I came into the shed at night to cut up the big wood I hung the lantern from it."

"Why did you do that?" asked the priest.

"I don't know," said Olz.

"Did you do that many times?"

"Every time I went to work in the shed at night."

"It was very wrong," said the priest. "Did you love your wife?"

"Ja, I loved her," Olz said. "I loved her fine."

"Did you understand it all?" asked the innkeeper. "You understand it all about his wife?"

"I heard it."

"How about eating?" John asked.

"You order," I said. "Do you think it's true?" I asked the innkeeper.

"Sure it's true," he said. "These peasants are beasts."

"Where did he go now?"

"He's gone to drink at my colleague's, the Löwen."

"He didn't want to drink with me," said the sexton.

"He didn't want to drink with him after he knew about his wife," said the innkeeper.

"Say," said John. "How about eating?"

"All right," I said.

MALCOLM COWLEY

BIOGRAPHY

1.

Allagazam
the princess with bobbed hair that rides
the rump of the bay mare
allagazam the gilded charioteers.
the pink hyena and also a little girl
making water behind the lilac bushes

allagazam
the Princess said and opened
her arms her eyes said Take me
but I am in love Madame
with three eccentric dancers
the steam calliope
played Annie Laurie

allagazam
allallagazam
see the Fat Lady
see the Bearded Lady
see the Lady with Two Heads
only twenty-five cents
only the fourth part
of allagazam

allagazam our world is either
measured too large for us or we
unmeasured to the day
who is your tailor?
what is the time Mr. Cowley
by last year's calendar?

2.

When I was fifteen, my father bought a farm in Somerset County near the Maryland line. There were seventy-four acres, about thirty of them in timber; there was a sloping meadow with young pines and hazel bushes growing in clusters round the stumps; there were three plowed fields, an L-shaped farmhouse and an immense red barn, with empty mows that could have swallowed the harvest of three farms. It was against the north side of the barn, where a bridge of planks led to the barn floor, that I would doze through the summer mornings, dreaming of crimes and ventures; I was a bandit or chased by bandits; I wore a dirk in my belt and boarded a privateer; I was a rebel, a maroon, a slaving captain, a spy. The world was printed in violent shades of good and evil, sunlight and shadow, white and black, like a woodcut of pirates. I was a generous foe and a lover without timidity.

And yet, at eleven o'clock, when I went to the house to meet Gracie Schultz, I would blush white; my palms were moist and my fingers cold to the tips. I warmed them against the iron porch-railings, grown stinging hot in the sun. Then I brushed the hay from my overalls, bit my lip, and opened the door.

She would be washing dishes on the kitchen table, her arms thrust deep into the water; or perhaps she would be standing beside the stove with a long spoon in her hand, her cheeks red, her forehead shining with invisible beads of sweat. I sneaked across the room and touched her under the armpits; she squirmed, giggled and chased me with the spoon, till suddenly I caught her by the wrist. We stood there a long time laughing, not looking each other in the face, while we heard my father stamping up the porch.

At one o'clock, when we had eaten dinner, she would start home across the meadow. I often watched her, thinking of her silent husband who worked in the mines. She had been seen driving at night with other men; she was childless, and the neighbors had no mercy on her. Their gos-

sip gave me courage, but her red shirtwaists were the color of her cheeks, and I was terribly afraid of her smile.

One morning my father went to Cherry Tree to sell some lumber. After I hitched the sorrel mare and watched him drive her to the gate, with the mud splashing against the dashboard, I ran to the house through the cold rain. On the porch I stopped to take off my raincoat and dry my hair against the roller towel. I called, "Gracie!" but there was no sound from the kitchen. Slowly I opened the door.

She was lying on the sofa with her eyes closed. I walked toward her. The wood fire was singing in the stove; I could see the embers fall and hear the rain driving in long sleepy gusts against the windowpanes. She took my hand, drawing me down until I could feel her damp breath against my cheek. My heart was beating louder than the clock. When I rose I walked slowly toward the door, crossed the porch and then, from the head of the steps, looked back at her. She was not watching me. Suddenly I ran toward the woods, with the rain beating in my face and the wet bushes whipping my legs. A root tripped me and I lay for a long time with my head half-buried in the mould. Those were days of dejections and exaltations I have never been able to win back. I was a man; my lips were grinning and my mouth tasted of tears. The rain trickled down my neck inside the collar. At a distance I could hear the buzz of a crosscut saw, the shouts of the lumbermen, or a tree crashing down into the brush.

After a sawmill had cankered away our woods, and the brook was a thread of sawdust-blackened water, my father sold the farm; he boasted of the profit. We drove away in a hired surrey, never looking back, while I sat in the rear seat, smoking like a man, and my father joked with the driver. Later we moved to Michigan, where he died in a village among strangers. I have had no friends since then. Only to buy, to sell, to move from place to place. . . .

Three men stepped into an elevator together. Downstairs in the lobby they said goodbye and walked three ways. One of them went home, joked with his wife over the soup, fell silent as he carved the roast, and later, when two friends

dropped in, played a rubber of bridge and went to bed. A second, spending the evening in a saloon, found glories in alcohol beyond my understanding; he will die poor at the breasts of the Church. The third went to a sporting house or gambled, came to the office with enormous projects at the tip of his nerves, made and lost fortunes, had mistresses with different qualities of soul or body. At a given day, after ten years, he met the second and the first—which of the three was I?

Day coaches, pullmans and blind baggage; down the Ohio in a coal barge and through the Ozarks on foot. To change your city often is philosophy. When I was twenty-eight, I came to Manhattan, city of journalists, factory where ideas are duplicated under the Taylor System. No admittance, if you have nothing to sell. But critics can be bribed to let you ride in the caboose of letters; and on every street corner there are ambulant poets who sell glimpses of the stars or moon, through a brass telescope, for ten cents, two nickels, the tenth part of a dollar. Allagazam, ladies and gents, step up, ladies and gents, see the rings of Saturn, the eclipse of Venus, the dry craters of the moon, the death of lyric verse. A dime, two nickels, the tenth part of a dollar. I bought a philosophy for ten cents, cut it into parcels, made each a paragraph, and sold them by the word.

We are the realtors of literature, dividing the countries of the mind into lots in Progress Grove or Endocardium Heights. We are the pimps of culture. We live in unreal cities and hatch our memories, a clump of hazel bushes, a sleepy rain, the clarified sunlight on the north side of a barn, in the morning, when the brain was purged of thought and even dream; slowly the sun climbed over the ridgepole and noon exploded with the noise of whistles in the valley.

3.

Leonora I inhabit an apartment
bath kitchenette hot water telephone
electric light and hardwood flooring. Come
I am here alone

I will show you in an album Leonora
my relatives who died years ago
also a genuine photograph of Jesus
blessing communion bread by radio

In the morning I will make you toast and coffee
Leonora I will do the shopping later
and bring you asparagus in a taxi
my heart on the dumbwaiter

Leonora O'Mara my bowels yearn after you
I will serve you my kidneys on a toaster
brains in a chafing dish my hand on a wicker tray
Leonore alla mina o nora malina
but Leonora wailed and went away.

4.

From the top reaches of a skyscraper, one can see roofs, tanks, chimneys and the Upper Bay. I work in a low second storey. The building squats between two theatres and hides its age under a fresh coat of stucco. I sit beside a window in the rear. Sometimes I stare, across a skylight and a dusty yard, at the rear wall of a theatrical hotel.

Faces stare back at me and change from day to day. The guests of the hotel are women; they come at night and sleep away the mornings. Later they dress in rehearsal rompers to sit on the fire escapes; they wear long silk stockings and their red hair shows an inch of brown at the roots. They talk loudly about plays and managers (oh, Sally, and did you hear what Sam Shubert said?) but they gain their living in other ways. I make coffee, kiss my wife, catch the subway express, and later I watch them through the window. Sometimes on Saturday afternoons, when I work alone, I listen to them singing.

Men come to their rooms, but on these occasions they never sing. Instead they drink and laugh, then carefully pull the blinds against the sun. They sing when they are alone, or three or half a dozen girls together; in clear nasal

voices, perhaps to the three chords of a ukulele, they hum the Farewell Blues:

Daddy went and left me and left the cupboard bare
(shuffle your feet) who will pay the butcher
bill now Daddy isn't there, now Daddy's gone
away (shuffle your feet, dance)

I work, and imagine temple girls of Vishnu or Chinese courtesans humming a similar melody, a complaint, the un-subtle statement that love and years are the only tragedy, *the cold ain't gettin you, you're just a gettin old*, the Dallas Blues, the Chang An Blues, I came from the far hills to Babylon, my love lies under the sea. Bubbles, dearie, it makes me feel so funny, honest, Bubbles, pour me a drink, what was that other song? Daddy's gone away, Mamma went away. The mood, the dominant color, the impulse which distinguishes jazz from the folk music of any other folk, is to rise suddenly and go:

I met her in Chicago and she was married (dance
all day) leave your man Sweet Mamma and
come away, open the door, call a taxi, come
away. Open the door wide.

And so, in the evening, they open the door, they go to meet their daddies and never return. Other faces, other melodies, take their place. I go home in the evening. Leonora, I live in a red brick street, but when spring comes there are always women who carry dogwood from the country and I can watch, in the evening, the spars and funnels of a ship outlined against the sun.

5. *The Farewell Blues*

I met her in Chicago and she was married
dance all day
leave your man Sweet Mamma and come away

manicured nails and kisses to dance all day all day
how it was sad

please Mr. Orchestra play us another tune

*My Daddy went and left me and left the cupboard bare
who will pay the butcher bill now Daddy isn't there?
shuffle your feet
found another daddy and he taught me not to care
and how to care
found another daddy that I'll follow anywhere
shuffle your feet, dance*

dance among the tables, dance across the floor
put your arms around me we'll go dancing out the door
Sweet Mamma anywhere through any door
wherever the banjos play is Tennessee.

ELIZABETH MADOX ROBERTS

DEATH AT BEARWALLOW

HE had been to see his grandmother and the way home was growing dark, the ground at his feet imperfectly seen, moving nearer than his feet, as if his feet stepped into it and out again, as if they walked into an open substance which was like sponge. He had run out of the road to chase a rabbit, off into a cornfield, and now he was sorry for this. His father would flog him when he reached home, that he knew, for not being at hand to help with the night work. The moon was already in the sky, there when the sun set, prepared for the night, hastening the night. The thorn bushes at the roadside were familiar, known in all their contours and sensed in all their power, known too well. The hills beyond the running line of the fence and the field sank into the dark of the sky, cool and even, a terror, going to the night too easily, joining the dark. All the familiar things of the road and the day fitted into the dark, rising out of it. He was too far from his grandmother's house to return there; he had been on the road now since long before sundown.

He was more afraid as he came near to Terry Polin's house, fearful of it, for old Terry Polin threw stones at the children and he was bent as if he were squared to the earth he walked unevenly over. Coming near to the house he stopped in the road and would not dare to pass farther. There were strange ticking noises, irregularly placed, like some diminutive speech put into the bushes beyond the fence where scrub cedars grew out of a bramble, but he was not afraid of the sounds. It was the earth that arose to engulf him, to open his grave before his feet. The dusty stones in the road threatened, rising familiarly into the light, already accurately known. He blunted his fear of the house before his renewed sense of the earth and walked heedlessly past Polin's cabin where it stood close by the roadside as a threat

standing clear in the moonlight. When he was well past it he saw that the light on the window was not the light of the moon. A lamp burned inside, and out of the walls came the low outcry of voices.

He came then to the creek that ran past Polin's house, but the way downward toward the ford seemed short. Then the water was over the stepping stones, and he was unable to see the stones in the dark, running freshet that had come from the rain of the early afternoon in the hills. He tried to find one stone with a long stick, and he thought that if he could strike one of them he would be able to work out the others, but the water was high and the stones were lost. The dark of the earth lay under his feet, ready to yawn, his abysmal place, and he went back along the road and stopped in the open under the moon, above the creek bank, well away from the shade about the ford. The dark bushes at the side of the road, twiggy and rugged against the white of the moon, arose out of the black of the earth. Over in the field beyond the fence, out of sight in the shaded hummocks of the stubble, some hogs were working at the soil, rooting their food out of it, deeply breathing and grunting their content. He looked again at the dark of the ford, and he tried again and again to probe the water with a stick, but in the end he left the creek hurriedly and walked back along the way toward the moonlight. The dusty stones of the road were misty with their own defeat as they sank out of the light and carried understanding with them as they went, too vividly known, already familiar of old. He cried in his terror, the sobbing cry of a child, and he stood in the road shuddering. A sudden increase of fear arose suffusing the entire night that threatened to split asunder to let terror out, a threat like the threatened crack of doom. Crack-of-doom stood in his path and waited upon a thunder crash. He ran back along the road and, pushing open the door, he went into the house without knocking.

There was a dim light in the room, a light that seemed fogged beside the light of the moon. Two men whose names he knew, Sam Mulligan and Leo Scruggs, sat beside the table laying cards up on the dim board, scraping their feet

on the floor when they rocked forward. Another man lay in the bed, lying very still.

"If here ain't Thompson Nally's boy," Scruggs said. "If here ain't that youngone, Dave Nally."

"What's he out so late for?" Mulligan asked.

There was a great laugh, the two of them joining to make it burst through the dim light and knock at the corners of the ceiling. The cards fell evenly from their hands, falling now one and now another to the table.

"God's sake, I bet that-there youngone was caught out. Afeared to go home by hisself."

"Come in to help old Terry Polin die."

"Doc says to me, 'Somebody's got to sit up tonight along with old Terry Polin. Somebody's got to.' Then I says, 'I don't mind if I do. As lief as not.'"

"I judge it's time now to be a-readen the prayer for the departen," Scruggs said. "I judge we best begin."

"Plenty time yet. Play on the cards. Quit your always a-blocken a game. It'll be a pretty while yet as I see."

He sat in the corner on the bare floor, near the door, between the light of the moon and the light of the lamp, touched by both. The man on the bed lay very still, but presently Sam Mulligan moved aside and the light fell toward the bed, and then by lifting his head and straining forward from the corner he could see the face that lay horizontal with the dull, yellowed pillow. The man on the bed was Terry Polin, the owner of the house. On the road old Terry threw stones at the children when they laughed and called out to him.

He knew that Terry Polin was on his bed to die and that the two men, Leo Scruggs and Sam Mulligan, were there to assist him. He himself was a small shape crouched in the corner, gathering himself to the smallest possible size, gathering inward his fear. He folded his hands into the warmth that was made where his arms touched his sides and bent his body toward the hollow where the two walls joined, drawing inward. He was glad that old Terry Polin was bound to die, that this would be the end of him, that he would not be throwing rocks on the road along with his curses when some

child called him a name. His fears grew dim before sleep and he sank into a surrounding oblivion. The voices at the table went first, leaving the dim square of the room with its blocked shadows, but these trembled softly and broke into fragments, dissolved. He dreamed a story of hoofs thundering on the turf at the place where the grown boys raced their horses, the coming rush of feet throwing up the sod in little balls that were sprayed with dust.

"You threw back your slobbers inside the water bucket," a loud voice said. "You can just go to the spring and get more water now."

Voices had waked him with a great clamor. The men were up in the floor, shaking the floor with their steps. They were calling out roughly in anger.

"I'll not do it. I never threw back my slobbers. I didn't have no slobbers left. I drank it up to the bottom of the dipper."

"You threw back your slobbers, Leo Scruggs. I seen you. You lie to me if you say you didn't."

"You call me a lie and I'll smear your face up. I didn't throw back no slobbers."

"I'll throw this-here water out the door, the whole bucketful, and you can get more or go dry the balance of the night. You're a lie, Leo Scruggs. I see you throw back slobbers."

"You throw out this-here water and I'll knock hell outen you. You can take back your lie, too, Sam Mulligan. You don't call me a lie and pass it off like the time of day. You can take back your words."

"I never take back nothing. God Almighty, who you think I am?"

The boards of the house shook with their trampled feet as they scuffled, as they tried to grapple each the other's throat. The table was brushed aside, the lamp uncertainly poised in the movement, but it did not fall. Their great shadows lurched among the corners of the room, and Terry Polin twitched his hands at the quilt's edge. Then the fight ended suddenly and both men laughed. Scruggs had overturned the water bucket by some accident. The water slopped over the floor and the bucket rolled along the boards

near the chimney, spilling the dipper. A foot kicked the dipper away.

They settled to their places again, both of them breathing deeply after the fight. They both laughed again and told incidents of the struggle over and over. Then Sam Mulligan took up the cards from the floor and began to set them straight.

"I reckon it's about time now to read the prayer for the departen," Scruggs said when he had cooled a little from the fight. "We best read now."

"Aw no. The night's young as I see it."

They set themselves to the cards again but Dave was afraid to sleep. The untended lamp burned dully and smoked the chimney, and Leo Scruggs scraped the wick with a long splinter. One after the other, they would deal the cards, the dealer spraying one portion of the cards upon the other as if the pages of two books were mingled into one mass. Another sound came steadily beside the dropping of the cards on the table and the irregular outcries of the game, and presently he knew that the other sound was the long slow breathing of the man on the bed, each breath lying between long spaces of quiet. At the end of a round the men burst into comments, a loud scuffle of voices that broke into enforced sleep. "God, I had a club hand! Whoop law, and a lousy queen! I says to Hick, 'Where'd you-all get that-there haimstrung thorough-bred?'" The voice came starkly then out of his sleep:

"Her dress gaped open and I saw her meat, saw her naked meat a-shown."

"Saw Claudie Burk's meat. God, what was that to see?"

"I know it's time now to be a-readen the prayer for the departen."

Mulligan peered down across the dim light toward the bed, stretching his neck to see the progress there, waiting while he peered. "Naw, not yet. Deal again. I reckon I know. Deal on the cards."

Morning would come, he thought, sinking against the wall, fading into the hard lines of the wall, meeting the contours of the plaster. His back ached for sleep and his legs

cramped as they were crumpled beneath him. After long intervals a deep breath shuddered through the dying man. The wall was merciful, inviting oblivion, and he sank toward it again and entered into it more nearly. A long interval of semi-knowing passed when the sounds found their accustomed rhythms and fell away entirely. Suddenly then a rough call splitting the density of forgetfulness.

Voice: I know it's time to be a-readen. I know it's gotten time to be a-readen the prayer for the departen.

Voice: Aw, not yet. I know.

Voice: What's he a-tryen to say?

Voice: He's a-callen Kate. K-k-k-k-ka-kate. Used to be his old woman. Kate Polin, don't you recollect?

Voice: We better begin to read the prayer for the departen.

Voice: Pick up that-there duce offen the floor. Play the cards. He ain't a-dyen easy, by gosh. Doc said afore morning. Come on now. It's four and four.

Voice: Doc says to me, "Somebody's got to sit up with old Terry Polin. . . ."

Voice: I disgust bad cards, but these-here are plumb stinken.

The event on the bed stood between him and the morning which would never come. He fell again into semi-sleep. The water would be over the stones until daylight. A great hand tended the lamp again, lifting away the chimney and clearing the wick, the shapes of fingers shadowing the room, great palms obliterating the ceiling and the bed. It seemed a long while after the incident of the fingers that a quick outcry rent the substance of the wall into which he had sunk. The men were leaping to the floor, the voices blended.

"I told you it was time . . ."

"God Almighty, where's that-there prayer book?"

"Find the place inside. Hold that-there lamp. Hold it higher. Quit your fool doens now. That's not the prayer book. God Almighty, where's the prayer book? Get the right book, you damned-to-hell fool. Get the prayer book, Leo Scruggs. Hunt it up. Hold the lamp steady now. Find that-there prayer book. . . ."

He ran out the door of the house. One light bare step on the floor and another on the door sill and he was beyond the reach of the lamplight. He ran down to the dark ford and waited among the cold shadows.

Valeria was dead, Bob Newton's girl, and the bans had been ready to publish. Dave Nally drove his plow through the crumpled dolomite soil making ground ready for winter wheat, and as he walked he knew his height suddenly and knew what it was to stand high above the ground in the stature of a man. This knowledge had grown upon him with the years and had not been openly confessed to his sense. The bell ringing at St. Rose came faintly across many hills and was dispersed among the stony rises and bushy hollows, shallow and thin. Hearing the bell he remembered the mission that would begin at St. Rose in two weeks, and a vague excitement surged in his breast and in his throat, for the mission would be someplace to go every night. But Valeria was dead. Going to the mission would not be what it had formerly been to Bob Newton, to himself, to his sister Piety, to Clel Tobin; the mission was gutted of its rich core. The earth he cut with the plowshare was dark with hard sand and the plow scraped the stones. As he walked behind the plow, one foot limping deeply into the furrow, he arose momentarily above the soil and sank anew into it, fluctuating with each roughly placed step. He knew then what it was to stand above the ground in the shape of a man, having all of a man's parts.

Valeria lay in a bed somewhere in her father's house. From the field he could see the crumpled gable of the house as it stood, small, almost invisible, out of two hills.

Across the road from his plowing lay the marsh where tall rushes grew, and out of it some water birds were crying. Old men at the store, talking about the country and about the early days, often said that once the bears had come there to wallow, that the bears had carried away the mud on their backs and had made the great pond. He knew how the water stood above the clay or sank into it, and the great oaks had been there when the bears had lain in the mire.

Bears had eaten the nuts from the tall hickory trees. The marsh seemed more curious, as one of the wonders of the earth, since he had heard of the bears, but on this morning as his gaze was fastened on the marsh while the plow rode across the rise of the field, he saw it in its relation to Valeria. His brother Dominic had walked across the field going to the still that was hidden down inside the bushy glen, had walked that way an hour earlier, and passing he had said:

"Valery, she's dead. Valery."

"Dead! How? Valery?"

"She died a right smart while ago this morning. She was taken bad last night at bedtime with a gripe in her heart and she died soon after daylight."

Valeria came acutely into his vision as he drove the team up the field, cutting the dirt apart for the winter seeds. At first a still pang lay within his breast, awe, disappointment, annoyance. Slowly the past tense gathered about her name and the present was sifted out of it. By the time he had plowed two rings about the field Valeria was dead, the matter settled and done, reported, closed. The beasts dragged at the heavy plow over the hill's rim, and the earth lay away, hill following hill, each interlocking with another. Coming across the brow, as the stubble rolled back to reveal its crumbled inner part, he saw swiftly into the earth, into the dark of the dirt. Year after year the plow but turned it over, wheeled it in procession. His eyes saw into it and saw the darkness under it.

As he went down the hill's farther side, slapping the plow rope on the mare's haunch, tears dimmed his eyes. Valeria had been Bob's girl, a warm creature with gray eyes, round arms and hips, soft to touch, warm to feel. Bob had known what it was to have her in his arms, and the bans were ready. He could hear clearly now the clatter of her laugh and feel her coming nearer, her swift step. Her hair was dark and her voice was kind for Bob and for Bob's friends, or impudently full of life. He had gone with Bob acutely in mind, knowing his way with her. Seeing them kiss, and seeing his sister Piety with Clel Tobin, he had turned to Pearl Janes and had kissed there, trying to want what he did, but she

was forbidding even when she invited. There was a hardness in her, a dull woodenness. They had walked to the graveyard and had looked at the place where the first to come into the country were buried, trying to find dates on the eaten stones. He had known intently what Valeria and Bob held between them and he had read their joy and their sense of each other. He had stood between them minutely while they looked together, their eyes full of their greetings, and he had gone with them in their frank caress. Now the tears dried on his face, the tears of his first surprise at the news, and he moved unevenly after the plow iron, holding it into the earth, his eyes searching the ground where it rolled apart.

His sister Piety was coming across the field toward the plow. She seemed very small as she bent to struggle against the rough furrows and clods, very delicate and small, a child, as she worked her way through the crumbled clods to the inner island of unplowed stubble where she waited until he came near, her apron folded over her head to shield her from the sun.

"Valery's dead," she said. She seemed untouched by grief, being too near the event herself. He saw her then as a woman standing in the heart of the field, speaking out of the stubble. Her hands were warm and moist as she held the apron over her shoulder and her body swelled its woman's curves. She was a part of what lay on Valeria's bed, of what had gone with Valeria.

"Dominic told me. Where's Bob at now?"

"He came by our house a right smart while ago. He's gone back home now to his pappy's. He was here, but now he's gone."

He looked at her, comprehending. They looked toward each other and away.

"Did Bob take on?"

"He wouldn't talk. He just set in his chair. They want you to stay there tonight. To sit up. With the corpse."

The horses stood at ease, resting, the harness falling limp across their tired flanks. He stood with his feet buried in the crumbled loam, accepting the need where it reached

toward him, making no sign. He was seeing Piety as Clel Tobin saw her, as Bob had seen Valeria, and this understanding overspread his thought and made him slow in acquiescing. She stood a moment before him, the warmth of her life issuing from her body, from her face, from her hair, infinitely capable of sustaining itself, of continuing. Her breasts, lifted with her lifted arm, throbbed with it before him, denoting warm being, the same as that which had moved in the other girl. They were the same to him, both something distinguished by the two boys, his friends, Bob and Clel Tobin. It was unthinkable that any disaster could bring it any hurt. Warm life darted now about Piety's mouth as she spoke and sat quietly on her eyes, or sat again on her small full shoulders and her back, her hips and her legs, her ankles. He nodded his willingness to the request and gathered taut the plow lines.

"I best put a stitch in your shirt with the blue stripe," she said. "I best mend it a little by the collar."

He remembered the garment, and remembered that he would have to put on his other clothes. "I'll quit up work early, in time to get there against night sets in. They might want help."

He saw her go back across the plowed space, picking her way slowly and with trouble through the broken earth. He saw a small blue shape, Piety, rising and falling in a struggle with the gullies and stony rises.

Two candles burned at Valeria's feet and the room was very still. Her people had gone to the other room, or they had gone above to the loft chamber. One or two sat on the chairs of the room or knelt at the prayers. When they stood the uneven boards creaked under the carpet Valeria herself had helped to weave at the loom. Her hands had gathered the winter bouquet, goldenrod and sassafras and thorn apples, gathered idly, not meant to keep; but now it would be saved on the shelf, standing on the mantel beyond the crucifix. At any moment of its gathering she was near to tossing it into the gully, caring then to keep only what Bob gave her.

He was staring at the light on the wall where the throb of the candle burst and spread unevenly. The other watcher was an old man, Ben Hester, and he had fallen asleep over his prayers where he knelt in a corner. The night moved slowly, and the weariness of the plow pulled at his limbs but he had no mind to sleep. He had read the prayers for the repose of the dead and he had been through the circle of the rosary, and now he stared at the beating light on the wall. Valeria was still, was waxen like an image at the altar. He turned his back to the room and sat facing the light that throbbed uneasily on the wall just beyond the crucifix and the dried bouquet of autumn. Bob's joy in Valeria arose as a spectre to question him and the book had fallen from his hands to lie unheeded on the floor. The ground at his feet moved nearer, imperfectly seen, making a pool about his ankles, arising to engulf him. "It's time now to be a-readen the prayer for the departen," a flat voice said, far back in his memory, one with his breath, "the prayer for the departen." This which Bob had with Valeria stood set apart, warm within itself, but his only by the knowing of it, it being theirs to have privately. A cry beat at his throat and sank deeply into his mind. He was staring at the wall and his feet were sinking into the dark of the floor. Within his own breath, the speech lying back of his inner disorder, the words lay perpetually, "It's time now to be a-readen that-there prayer for the departen."

The man on the bed was himself, Dave Nally, his head on the pillow, his feet stretched out far and cold. As he lay his eyes looked up at the ceiling which was a fixity holding length and depth in a four-square design. His throat struggled with the words of the rosary, the words pushed against his throat as against shut gates that held firmly, that rattled on lock and hinges, "Hail Mary full of grace, blessed art thou among women." His entire self from first to the present moment lay back in his being, and he was one, breathing and living, the same he had always been. He could leap back to the beginning or forward to the end, the now, the last moment. It was night and he and Dominic were beside the fire, Dominic taking a piece of food from

their mother's hands. He was holding his hands, the same hands he now had, to the warmth of the fire, saying over and over, "Six times seven is forty-two, six times seven. That's my word to remember." The hammering words of the prayer still beat at the hinges of his shut throat, and his fingers felt the hard little berries of the rosary, but when he lifted his hands under the quilt he found that they were cold and empty. There were no beads.

The two candles burned behind him at Valeria's feet and she was still, like wax. The light shook on the yellowed wall, leaping and falling slowly. His hands were at the quilt's edge, adjusting the world. He was cold and he ought to have gloves, his hands smarting, hard and stiff and raw with deep chapped places that bled. His mammy would knit him some gloves if she were still living. He would sit close to the fire and the heat would glide into his bones slowly, a little at a time. He would take his coat off to let the warmth in, and he would sit and hear the log crackle and settle itself into a quiet lapping flame, until he would float on the warmth and the cold would sink back and away. His own warmth, all for him, would sink inside his shirt, the same inside he had always had. Ten hail-maries and then one our-father, in his hands as marbles on a string. A sudden outcry: You threw back your slobbers. I see you do it. You lie to me if you say you didn't. I didn't do it. I never threw my slobbers back. I drank it all to the last drop. You did so throw back your slobbers. I never had no slobbers. You lie and I'll tear your guts out. You'll eat back your words. I never take nothing back. God Almighty who you think I am. It's time now to be a-readen the prayer for the departen. Naw, not yet, plenty time yet as I see. Play down your hand, quit a-blocken a game.

He was with a pack of boys, hunting across fields and into woods. A pack of boys, himself one, and a little girl hiding. She was running down a thicket, her skimp little dress, drab, showing now and then in the brush. Hoarse cries, unknown to themselves, were coming out of their throats. Four boys, himself one. She was gone, swallowed up by the ground or slipped away through some fence, Sallie Bent, lost to them,

safe. Down into a deep hollow where the path ran cool, and she was lost to them, two of the boys off after a rabbit and one, Wes Hyte, lagging behind in the cool brush, lying on the moss, loving the moss.

Slowly he came back to the light of the lamp behind the smoky chimney and then to the hands that lifted regularly over the edge of the table and dropped the cards. "There's my high and the ace ain't out. A queen for high. Her dress gapped open and I see her naked meat a-shown. I see old man Hicks come down the pike a-driven a haim-strung critter. Where'd he get that-there haim-strung nag? Deal out again, egad, and give me something this-here time." The voice took tone:

"Is it time now to be a-readen the prayer for the departen?"

The lamp made pink streams across the space before the window, long colored lines running down into the light across the powdered dark of the room. The air was still except that something rattled slowly in long waves, a rattling lying across the continued stillness. A great head stood up above the turned shoulders, nose, mouth, eyes and hair. The eyes looked down across the quiet space, peering and staring at him out of their shadowed lids.

"Naw, not yet. Deal again. Plenty time. Reckon I know."

The cards fell slowly one on the other, making no sounds, but now and then a hand thumped the table impatiently. Fragments of the prayer for the departing appeared in mind, imperfectly remembered, the litany for the dying, never learned in life. "Lord have mercy on him. Christ have mercy on him. Lord have mercy . . . Holy Mary pray for him . . . All ye holy angels and archangels . . ." The supplications were rising and falling away . . . "All ye choirs of the just . . . Have pity, Lord, on his sighs, have pity on his tears. Loosed from the bonds of flesh . . ." Somebody would have to read the words from the book.

He was sitting in the pew with Piety and his mother, at late mass. A wasp was dipping up and down slowly over old Mrs. Hester's bonnet, touching the black of the crown. Piety was kneeling saying prayers, her eyes half asleep, her

feet set upright behind the hem of her dress, her lips whispering rapid, wordless motions. He was turning through the prayer book, watching the leaves fall over the brim of it, motions of leaves, the worn edges soft like rag. His eyes had read without seeing, The Litany of the Saints, The Ordinary of the Mass, Prayer for one Departing this Life. The words stood on the page like poetry in a book.

St. Mary Magdalen,
St. Lucy,
All ye holy virgins and widows.

He fingered the edge of the quilt to settle the edges of the world into order, to make all right, to straighten a crease. A great hand shadowed the lamp and the light fell through the gapped fingers and became a turmoil that threatened to wrench his hold from the side of the quilt. "I know you did throw your slobbers back. I did not so. You call me a lie and I'll tear your guts outen your belly . . ." There was something he, Terry Polin, had always been wanting, needing, and he could not now gather the name of it or the meaning. It was something he was always wanting and getting and wanting again. He could not divine how it was called. It was gone now and the name of it gone. It was something that ran in his limbs, in his legs and arms and sides. It was kate; he had found the name for it. It seemed very far away now, forgotten in the way of its going, but the name was now assembled, kate in his arms and legs, in his breast bone.

Slowly this sense grew definite and firm, gathering a person about it, Kate, a warm moving body, a blood-containing flesh, hands lifted and rising before the puffed breasts as she sewed. Hurrying down to the chicken house with a pan of meal dough or going in at the door of the house, closing the door. Ask Kate. Tell Kate. These were incessant sayings, never refuted. Tell Kate about the low price of hogs, himself almost giving them away. She was the mammy of his children, Tony and Mag and Terry B. Kate moved down a film of air, her hands moving, setting food out or cooking food, making a bed, combing her hair, drawing on

her clothes that smelt warm and full, like her body and like the things she handled all day, food, chickens, feathers, ashes, earth, children. He would ask Kate, tell Kate, tell her now. A great cry formed in his body and rushed up into his throat, into his loose throat, and there it hung on folds of flesh entangled with breath and struggled forth in a dry hissing sound. "K-k-k-k Ka-Kate!" Two great heads stood up above a mass of shoulders and turned wide-opened eyes toward him. He brought his gaze down from the dispersed light of the room and centered it upon the two heads that turned toward him staring, they being the world. The rattle that shook through the quiet of the room was his breath, his own, climbing down long slow stairs with great steps. He was one, the same he had always been, as when he ran out at the door in a little blue dress, climbing up the hen ladder.

Voice: I know now it's time to be a-readen the prayer for the departen. . . .

Voice: Find me that-there prayer book. . . .

Voice: God Almighty, where's that-there book. Find it quick. Find the place. I never take nothing back.

Who you think I am?

Voice: Lord have mercy on him

Christ have mercy on him

Lord have mercy

Holy Mary pray for him

All ye holy angels. . . .

Holy Abel . . .

Thy creature not made by strange gods but by thee. . . .

Loosed from the bonds of flesh he may attain . . .

may attain . . . may attain. . . .

He arose and went bending toward the house door, looking past the candles that burned at Valeria's feet. The night was cool outside, the crying of the night noises an infinity of sound sinking back and arising perpetually in the three-ply space of the night-quiet. The darkness was complete, no part of it distinguished from any other part.

ALTER BRODY

LOWING IN THE NIGHT

AN INVISIBLE PLAY

SCENE: *A bedroom back of a candystore in the Bronx.
It is about midnight and the lights are turned off.*

CHARACTERS: *A man's voice.
A woman's voice.*

АН, good to dismount from one's legs after a long day at the counter! \$97.34 in the cash register—not so bad for a rainy Sunday, God be thanked!

Did you bar the store door?

I barred the store door, I put away the money, I iced two vanilla and one strawberry can for tomorrow, I put out the garbage, I banked the furnace for the night—anything else, my pretty little sergeant? May I take my shoes off?

Take your great big stupid head off! Go to sleep and leave me alone. Everything is a joke to him.

Who's joking? It's no joke having a wife like mine. Try to joke with such a blister on your tongue!

Hear him squeal—just hear him! Poor persecuted pig—got himself a nag of a wife and she doesn't give him a chance to rest his fat buttocks! If you didn't pasture yourself so well, maybe it wouldn't be such a task to stand on your legs. . . . Go, drag them into bed already, and stop smearing salt on my wounds.

Who smears salt on a herring? Oh what a salty piece of herring you are—If I weren't a Russian and didn't just dote on herring. . . . Come, come, turn around and give us a kiss for an appetizer. . . .

There! Keep your paws to yourself and don't touch me, or I'll jump out of bed!

If one can't touch one's own wife, whom is one to touch? I appeal to you—is that justice? Come, turn around and let's be friends tonight. After all, I'm a relative of yours by marriage. . . . What's this . . . my little birdie-eyes chirping in the dark . . . chirping tears in the dark. . . . I thought there was something wrong. . . .

Do I have to ask your permission?

But where is the calamity? What happened today? Nothing, except that your mother was here, and that's nothing to cry over. She's my mother-in-law, not yours.

You're a big cow—that's what happened.

A little while ago I was a pig, and now I am a cow. Try and get women to be reasonable. 'If grandpa were a grandma, the roosters would hatch.' At the worst I may be a bull, but I can't very well be a cow. And beside, that happened forty years ago. Otherwise things aren't so bad. Business is fine. True, you have to help me at the store, but God granting a good customer, we'll sell it soon and invest our money in a nice little apartment house. And then we'll take a regular flat, and you'll be able to sit home like a lady.

And what will I do home . . . play with my dolls?

Is it my fault. . . .

No it's mine!

There you go—twisting my words before they even leave my mouth. . . . Have I ever reproached you? Do I send you to doctors? Do I suggest operations? You know what I've said: If God gives us a child I will rejoice. Who will deny it . . . cheerful having a little reptile creeping around the house . . . would give one more appetite for business, I suppose—something to lie for and scheme for the way the others do—one gets ambitious. . . . Besides, when I think of all the whippings I got from my father—at least if I

could pass it on to my son! But if God denies it to us . . . well . . . I suppose He knows best. Who knows! Children aren't always blessings. It was my mother's favorite curse: I wish you no harm, my son, only that you should grow up to be a father and know what it is to have children!

So I can account myself lucky. Fortunate one that I am, and don't know it! What am I crying about? Let's thank God instead and pray that I remain childless!

Laugh if you like . . . but God knows our lack . . . God knows what is best.

Everything is for the best with you, my saint—you have a good word for everything! Whatever God gives, whatever is fed into your mouth, you're satisfied. Why? . . . because you're a cow. I curse, I weep, I devour myself over things. But you chew on contentedly—nothing wanting, nothing lacking. . . .

So be it. Maybe you think I'm abashed? We're all cows before God, and whatever He gives, that we have to chew. The clever ones and the stupid ones. Even your smart uncle Irving, who thinks he's fooling the whole world. We're all cows before God, only to each one his cud tastes different. To some sweeter, to some bitterer.

And if my cud tastes bitter to me, why should I keep it in my mouth? Why! I am tired of chewing straw . . . I am tired of it all. Tomorrow you'll call up the broker's, and we'll sell the store to the first customer that comes along. I've washed enough soda glasses. From now on I want to live—you hear—I want to live!

Sh . . . sh . . . the whole block will be listening to you! You make me feel I'm murdering you—shrieking at me that way. . . . Can I call up the brokers in the middle of the night? Tomorrow the first thing in the morning I'll call up. . . . There . . . you have my word. Can I do anything else!

Nothing. . . .

-Turning over for a cry again! Grudge me the satisfaction of seeing you stop a while!

If only she wouldn't come mourning over me every week . . . One would think I was dead and buried already by the way she looks at me. . . As if it was my grave she's visiting and not me. . . All because I can't turn out a baby for her every two years, like my sister-in-law. . . One would think I owed it to her—promised her grandchildren and cheated her out of them!

Your own mother!—Is it ill that she wishes you if she wishes you a child? Besides, she hasn't uttered a word about it.

Oh no—she doesn't say anything! Only she comes in with that resigned, sad face on her—as if she expects nothing from me, and is reconciled to her fate. . . One would think I wasn't a virgin when she married me off . . . the way she's afraid to look me in the face when she talks to me! And when she does lift her eyes at me, it's as if I was a photograph on the wall—stands staring at me the way she used to stare at Jake's picture when he was in France. If I'm such a sorrow to look at, let her stay away. Let her go to her daughter-in-law's, where she can enjoy herself.

A mother lusts for her daughter's happiness. . . Is it a crime?

But what does she expect me to do? Am I hiding anything from her in my womb? Must I tear open my belly and show her that I am an empty cask? And haven't I done it for her! . . . dragged myself from office to office to be handled and felt around by the doctors, till I feel like a chuck of meat in the butcher shop, and not like a decent woman . . . had myself cut open on the operating table and searched for my blemish—the way she searches the entrails of a chicken. So I'm not kosher! So I'm not fit to bring Jews into the world! Divorce me and get yourself another wife!

What do you want of me? Who's reproaching you? As

for your mother—you yourself kept the operation a secret from her, for fear she wouldn't permit it. And now you talk as if she drove you to it.

Of course, she'd have moved heaven and earth to stop me . . . but I know what's in her heart. For fear I might die under the knife, and she feel guilty! But in her heart of hearts she thinks one should stop at nothing for the sake of a child. . . .

But not to risk your life! How you talk! Aren't you a child too to your mother, and dear to her?

A precious life I have to lose! What sort of gift is it, that I should treasure it so! What'll I do with it? Another thousand dollars in the bank, another fur coat, another piece of jewelry! But what good is it, if under all the furs and silks and jewels that you may heap over me, I feel like a pole—like a dry, dressed-up pole. . . . She's right. . . . I might as well be dead!

See how you toss around. . . back and forth . . . forgetting your own words.

She's right! She's right! One should try! Maybe another doctor . . . maybe another operation! Oh I would have myself chopped into little pieces if it would only help! . . . Gladly! God! God! have pity on me! Remove my shame from me and don't let me live like a stone! Even if I die in childbirth . . . even if I never live to see it! Just to feel it inside of me . . . just to carry it in my womb. . . .

Enough now . . . let yourself alone . . . or you'll tear your mind loose . . .

It hurts . . . it hurts. . . you don't understand how it hurts!—Every minute of the day. . . . They troop in and out of the store with their children. They flaunt their riches before me, and I have to admire! . . . Swallow my bitterness and find something sweet to remark about each one. . . . Twist my face into a smile for each one as I wait on them . . . But all the time my heart is twisted like a clenched

fist . . . Not that I hate the little ones, but that I have to hold my heart back . . . lest it leap out to them! Today just before mother came, the druggist's little boy walked in . . . He stuck his finger at the showcase . . . such a chubby little finger, sweet and sticky like a piece of candy . . . "How much is this?" . . . "Three for a penny," I glowed back at him, bending over him as in Russia one bent over the charcoal-pot on a frosty morning . . . "How much is three?" . . . There was no one around. He was so soft and sweet and helpless. I had such a wild desire to catch him up in my arms, and stuff him inside of me and make him mine in some way. . . .

And do you think I have a raisin for a soul—dried and without juice in it? I also am human, and dreams go through *my* head too. I may be stupid—not like the smart salesmen from the wholesalers who know how to banter with women, and think they can cajole you into buying anything from them . . . but I have a soul in me too. . . . Nice to have a little bandit in the house! Sometimes my heart pinches a little when I sell a pair of roller skates to a youngster, and help him put them on . . . But one catches one's breath again and shrugs it off. What's the use! Can one force God's hand if He's not willing? Each one has his own portion. What's for others is for others . . . what's for us is for us.

For others to worry how they can stave off a baby . . . for me . . . to hold my arms open . . . and nothing comes! For others to rid themselves of them like vermin . . . with poisons and all sorts of horrible contraptions . . . While I . . . I . . .

Enough for tonight! Enough! Starting yourself again?

Enough for tonight! Enough! . . . I must save some for tomorrow night . . . and all the nights to come . . .

You are young . . . God may rejoice us yet . . . Why should you talk that way?

Young! I am the young one and my mother is the old one

—but what use is my youth? I feel like a dead branch sticking from her heart. Can't green like the others—an evil wind break her off—but sticks there uselessly . . . sticks there, like a planted pole!

You are not useless to me. . .

Yes! Yes! I know what you need me for . . . only don't—don't touch me! It's become tasteless and disgusting to me . . . the whole thing! Just a bed pan for you to empty your lust in . . . that's all! You ought to be disgusted with it yourself . . . after all the doctors had felt me and poked me and carved me—that you should want me any more. . .

May I never rise from this bed, if I thought of such a thing! It's not that one always wants . . . Don't you think I feel lonely too sometimes? I also am childless . . . The years fly—how many more are there left? What comfort have we got for our old age, but each other?

Yes, fatty, I know it's hard on you too . . . but I feel nasty tonight, and can't help myself. . . Just let me alone.

I can't leave you alone. I can't listen to you gnawing your heart out, and just turn over on the other side as if you were a mouse in the wall.

You have a good heart, fatty, but I'm not worth it. I am a cross little girl tonight, and nothing pleases me.

You're *my* cross little girl, and you can be as cross as you like with me. See . . . I am not lonely . . . I am not childless, if I have you. You are my child, my little daughter . . . saucy and sweet as any high school girl . . . bossing her fat old father about the store . . . making him do this and that . . . scolding him to her heart's content. And sometimes I'm your mother . . . your fat old mother, who gets fatter and fatter with watching how pretty you're growing. And every time she passes a dress in a store window, she thinks of how nice her little girl would look in it. And every time she passes a restaurant, she thinks of some delicacy she might make her.

It's good to have you, fatty. Sometimes you do feel like a mother . . . with your big, flabby cheeks, and waddling, flat feet, and great soft hands . . . so strong and so gentle. I've been a cross little girl to you . . . hard to please . . . but you've always been patient. I'll try to be patient too . . . I'll try to be your good little girl, and maybe we can be happy.

You've always been my good little girl . . . my dear little girl!

Your selfish little girl, that never stops to think of *her* little boy. . . I've forgotten all about him and he never says a word! . . . Doesn't he need a mother too sometimes . . . even such a big boy? Doesn't he ever wish he was somebody's little boy? My big little fat boy, that everybody makes fun of because he is too good-natured to mind . . . that everybody thinks stupid because he lacks a malicious tongue . . . Come to my arms, my fat little boy . . . come . . . come . . . come . . . Oh!

My dove . . . my darling . . . my sweet one. . . .

No! . . . go away . . . don't . . . don't . . . don't . . . beast! . . . beast! . . . beast! . . .

CURTAIN

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

THE TEMPTATION OF ANTHONY

1.

As slow as a tide a flood of cloud
enormously in the western sky
foamed into a silent surf,
so white there fell no shadows in the fold.
Sunset had not built its corals yet.

There, in the proscenium of the sky it masqued,
became in turn assemblies in dumb session,
the ghosts of herds cropping the ghosts of fields,
a city maned with domes,
a harbor woven white with sails;

and finally the never finished pediment
of a never finished house, and on it
the toppling statuary derided
the hopeless architecture of the wind.

Father and son, they saw it together
and even the impatient hand of the younger
relaxed on the stems of the grasses
which lay about him in strangled tufts.
"This beauty," said the son, "lies upon the sky
as if in witness that it is the handiwork of Heaven."

Old Anthony, smoking, breathed upon his pipe
and poured a vapor forth that mimed the cloud,
and laughed, as always, patiently.

The boy jumped up, imperious with youth,
a twist of field flowers in his clenching hand.
"I have familed myself with God, and now
I am more in His company than yours."

"Then spare these flowers that have been called His children."

The young man dropped the flowers. He said
"That is the sarcasm of one who would uproot a soul from God."

The old man answered, "I meant no sarcasm.
I love the flowers and cannot see them killed,
and if your soul in God blossoms like these,
I will praise God as I praise the fruitful earth."

"The shadow of your unfaith is over me,"
the son said, "and I will have a wizened growing."

"I cannot love your faith because it is a conqueror;
it is a carnivore of the mind, it hunts
its other creatures."

"Son of yours I am not," the boy screamed,
"and will be only when you own our Father."

"A father who would be doubled in his sons,
he is a usurer. I never urged paternal rights upon you.
But in this you are not more unnatural
than when you seek to violate my naked mind.
I pray that elsewhere you may find a God of peace;
that you may read a cloud and search
no Notary Public God's seal on it."

The young man walked away and anger
gnarled his body. His father crumpled in the grass
seeking some hold of comfort. He watched
draperies of horizon that the ground lifted to his eye;
he put his hot cheek to the muzzle of the wind;
he played God for the ants who climbed him.
But he was heavy with his son's rejection and was glad
to see a golfer's ball roll out beside him.
He picked it up and held it for the player.

A ruddy man approached, hailing and thanking duly,

and they mixed some words upon the weather
and upon the art and humors of the game.
Anthony asked the player, "Have you ever had a son
leave you?" "Why all sons do," said the other,
and seeing the shaking lips of the old man, put zeal
into his voice, "All sons go; it's an unlucky father
whose sons stick to him, for they never make men.
Mine almost grew a Socialist in revolt from me.
I knew not if to call him more lunatic or more fool.
He went away, my blurby Galahad, questing freedom,
not knowing that this city of the mind lies
only in the mind. He learned how hard it is to keep
the pot of the belly boiling, and in time,
after newspaper jobs which taught him
to despise these public shows of life—
Roman spectacles upon paper arenas—
and after a torment of the bargain love
dealt in by the impotent-hearted,
he solved himself in business and sank into a home;
in his own way finding the place I marked for him. Now
he is my double. We visit each other with the free
cordiality of neighbors and are even less person-tied
than neighbors, the greater bond having been broken."

"And in time he too," Anthony said, "will goad away a son.
My boy, meeting no balk to make him rebel,
becomes my tyrant. Youth has a muscular will
that must be exercised on opposition.
You should see my son. He has been spoilt
by self-reliance, and walks about like Destiny's ambassador.
He is silent and significant; he knows the market
for a moody face; wherever he parades
his bleak and upright back, the neighbors whisper,
'There's a boy who will amount to something',
not knowing that a goodness so boned with pride
and leaded with complacency is but
an armored skeleton.
He has no honest passion. Vanity is not yet adult in him
and yields no perfect pleasure, but he fondles it

and glares with duties like an onanist.
He has no taste for purity and he'll bring home
a stagnant virgin, rank with prudery,
or some hard handled whore, submissive to reform
and loving it perhaps for lashes on the mind.
Our little world in which I left him free
he has, by little and larger, altered; ten times has changed
the posture of a chair, and now has taken
me for a piece of mending."

Anthony ended in a meek suspense, looking
for a sign of understanding in the other face.
But the golfer, grown impatient,
issued his gasp of assent and strode off.

Anthony, softly with his teeth, pricked his too simple tongue
that always told too much; he saw the golfer in the dressing
room

after the showers and warm with whiskey
drooling of "the old man who told stories on his son."
He would be described, gentle and thin, brown and humble
in the face,

long in every feature, long and streaming in the limbs,
a gangling sort of old man (long tongued too),
and someone would be there to recognize and say,
"that's queer Anthony, the Atheist," and tell
blotting, noisome stories, that Anthony had seen casting
from him

distorting shadows that he could not outstep,
from the livid moons of spying
that his neighbors came to keep upon him.

It was midevening when Anthony walked home.
The sidewalk trees tumultuous with wind, disturbed him,
and with despair he watched the small, lit houses
inside the garden hedges as one might see
the campfires of an enemy. Sound after sound
volleyed at him, hooters of his exile;
men scraped plates, and the jingle of tableware

was like an ostentation of riches;
women laughed and spoke and silenced children;
music flared up around him; with agony he heard a girl
singing,
the pregnant, wooing woman voice winding in his ear.
And he was near to running to escape it; and to this
the boeing of the dogs added a bitter excess.

His son was gone. Anthony in the dark room
called for him, up into the suddenly useless stairs
and over a silence that his own emptiness made profound.
He sat down and welcomed weariness
that made his body nurse unto his mind.
After a time he let the light go on
to illustrate his trouble, and Anthony felt
on the swift accounting of his eye
petty and strange chagrins in the absence
of familiar things the boy had taken with him,
each absence being insidious witness
of his abandonment. Anthony felt no grief.
He had not loved his son, having shrunk
from the brutish monotony of his mind,
but his life had reckoned in the boy
in every daily motion, and habit
hungered in him as he sat alone.
And in this solitude that he had once praised
as image of the only heaven that could tempt him,
he was like a man at bay.

A letter came. His son was in a seminary
which he said Anthony would find habitable because
its paradise of religion had dropped into an earth;
the Adam of Faith was given his cool-cheeked Eve of Reason.

Later another letter, sulphurous with warning:
his son would come back for a week; he had
important things to tell and Anthony
must make his mind bald of any curl of irony.

Anthony saw a young woman stepping from the train
and walking to the stile gravely leaning on his son's arm.
He thought, "The mystery is over and the outcome shames
my prophecy.

Nature has reaped its harvest in my boy and he has married

a pleasing woman and no hag, sick with soulworm.

He brings her to me to show her off,
not, as he thinks, in truce with the proprieties."

The two came close to him and Anthony was startled
at his son's face, the stony place whereon
no growth of feeling ever came to crop.
Within his eyes the glances stood like pines,
rigid and dark and sharp.

He introduced the woman, a Mrs. Something—

And Anthony thought, "poor woman,
but if she is a widow, she may be
learned enough in sorrows to endure my son."

But as he watched them close he saw they shared no love.

Not for the formality between them (by which
his son could make the marriage rite beget
its own new generations of discomforts),
but there lacked a warmth of joining; they stood
in no mutual shadows; there wanted
self-legalizing word and gesture of belonging.

Anthony was surprised that fear should further trouble his
surprise.

He had believed women to be sole solvent of hard men
and had taken a quick annulled pleasure
in the prospect of his son's marrying.

He looked at the lonely hanging woman
swinging on his son's arm and he felt her somehow pitiful,
even though her even face, within its simple yellow hair,
lay still and even couching in her smile,
a comely woman nowhere meager or at bone.
She had a redeless laughter in her voice

that won for her the favor of the listeners
as birds enjoy the good will of all men.

But there was something hiding in her words which she let
go
too rarely from the shelters of her silence, and always
with a hand of compromise upon them; she spoke
like sounds in a rain, and Anthony knew
storm bolts had left a scar of terror.

Anthony asked his son what was the surprise
that he had threatened. Was it a marriage after all?
"No marriage," said the son, and the matter
would be told at home. He lifted out again the question
of Anthony's religion. Anthony laughed quickly, saying,
"God has had some peace since your departure.
Let us not spoil His holiday."
The son flushed with revived anger. "It is well said,
the heathen are our own; savages at least have idols.
My father worships his own head!"
"You are unjust as ever," Anthony said. "Can't you see
that you do worship to an even smaller thing,
a single shadow in your head, a small idea that you make
smaller?"

The woman mildly spoke between them,
"We should teach religion by example not by argument."
"True," said Anthony, "and I have learned more by my
son's example
than by his arguments which belch his bully's faith
under the maxims of a man of peace."

"He who took upon Him all the world's sin
taught us that our conscience is not a skin
to cover ourselves alone. Mine too is the guilt,
that you have sinned so awfully and put away Our Father."

Thus to the end of the journey. The son walked deep
within the house
and did not stretch his eye to fondle the familiar things.

Heavily he sat at table. And turned to Anthony,
“Now you shall know why we are here. I bring through
this woman
a message from my mother, who spoke to me.
And as I feared, mother is unhappy
that you are fast in your unfaith; so you prolong her dying.
And I have brought this woman with me
that you may speak to her whom you loved.”

Anthony stood up and sat again, and he was hot and groping
in a fog of anger. “You have surprised me well,
for this is more horrible than I have had imagination for.
Get out of my house.”

“My mother bids me stay.”

Anthony, in the hot silence that locked over him,
went again from fury to contempt and so returned
to tolerance, which he knew was self-confessing helplessness.
He said to his exhausted mind,
as if to rouse it from a haunt of sleep, “You should be
furious.

Your hissing spittle should be foaming through your teeth.
Your eyes should be two bullets, and your voice
should terrify by strangling its own words
and you should melt your hands to two hard fists.”

But with self-soothing irony he spoke,
“Why do you pick your mother’s bones, my son?
It is a pitiful immortality, so to be resurrected,
to find a second life within a twice-dead argument.
If she could speak, she’d speak to me, for while
our body’s love brought forth a body—you—
our mind’s love brought us spirits wild and beautiful.
Speech was ever our most blissful bridal.
I would let die all but my voice, to have her voice again.”

“She speaks to you,” said the son, “through this woman.”
“No more of that!” shouted Anthony. “This woman is a
widow, I suppose,
who loved her husband and is affianced to his death,

falling into her solitude as into her own grave.
She has raised a mist and made a swamp with weeping
in which the maggots and mirages of small faith
could play at heaven and angels. She has come
to make this thing a refuge. I will not witness
this staged sickbed, this drilled delirium,—
You must go—” Anthony paused to choose among his
words.

A cry tore through the woman, as it were the sound
of her shaking body, and hideous whiteness shrouded up her
face.
She seized his son’s arm, screaming, “Let us go!”

The next day Anthony passing people in the street
felt the sting of sidelong glances, the prick of whispers.
He turned around and hailed a woman in a group
famous in the town for her mothering of rumor
which in her care got a prize pig’s breeding. Anthony
offered
to help her with the secret. She wasted but one blush
before she flourished ready anger and fronted Anthony like
a judge
and took her interrupted pleasure in the supreme gossip
of fearless frankness. “You turned your own son out of
doors
and would not hear your wife speak out of heaven.
Last night we had a meeting and heard her calling you,
telling you of God and God’s forgiveness.
Your son forgives you.”

“My son?” writhed Anthony,
“The snake forgives the dead on which it broke a fang!
Go tell my son that I am not so generous.
Tell him never to see me, that I would feel
safer among thieves and easier among lunatics.
I have kept dignity and reason out of his reach
though my peace is his plunder. Let it suffice him. As for
you,

come to my house and smell my linens
and see the rats and roaches, (sins come to life),
infest me like remorse.

I'll open out the atlas of our crimes:
what chair rode a murder, what roof beam swung a suicide,
in what ballrooms played the preludes of adultery
themselves the antequalsms of death.

I will read you, itemized, the roll of bastards,
the roll of ancestors who seesawed on the gibbet.

We will go down a romantic cellar stairway
where a cypress tree of stench branching to the four corners
will mark a pit living with corpses,
the hoard of a hundred years of slaughter.

When we come up again I will lead you to
the stand of cedar inlaid with human bone
which holds the master ledger of our sinners.

Your eyes will stagger in their holes for very drunkenness.
You'll be palsied with orgasms.

And it will be your sweetest memory
until you make your final slander in your death."

A Winter of silence froze about him, the burying Winter;
silence, pathless to the mind, and path destroying,
like the snow burying him deep in his house,
his wind tracked house, full of the cavern wind of loneli-
ness,

reeking with echoes, and all the rooms crowded
with the fallen, wrecked statues of memories.

The world outside was Winter, putting the white mold
on the green of life, and ice-eyed people spied upon him.

Still Anthony could laugh, but sometimes hearing it
he felt it was a chattering of the teeth,
but he laughed on to signal to himself, he was alive.
He read his books over. He found himself liking most,
biographies, in which he seemed to gossip with a friend
about another friend, blackening the margins with notes
in repartee. Sometimes he heard himself saying,
"Now, Mr. Dickens—" and "I got you there, Mr. Swift—"

But his books, giving him great men's company or at least the great hours of men speaking from their summits, could not be the cure of this depriving loneliness, but only admissible disparagement.

He felt that a single other human being there would throw, by the mere waver of his shadow and all the small vapors and shudders of life, a humanizing reference over his books. And the thought came to him that the town library might be his asylum, where men would be

better than themselves, since they came to cope with betters; breaking and brushing off the film of superficiality that coated daily life, donning books like diving bells to live within the depths.

He went to the little building, modest in spite of wooden pillars eight yards high, and there began books for finishing at home.

The high wide walls seemed silenced without the mouths of pictures.

Feet whispered on these floors, going tiptoe, revealing the self-consciousness of men in the presence of books and men communing with them. The self was sheathed.

Faces, poring over books, were calm, composed about unviolent curiosities; no lashing cruelty drove their eyes; no scorn boiled on their lips.

Anthony looked from jaw to jaw surveying the posted heads, seeking, in some eyes' restlessness or mildness, occasion for speech; finally leaned toward his neighbor, "Our mutual friends, our books, will make us friends," and whispered. The man was half-eared but double voiced and in full volume shouted, "What!"

The librarian turned around, rotating disapproval, tapped his pencil,

tut-tut, and Anthony backed into his book, waiting until he heard

the creak of a lightened chair and slide of book along the table

and saw a man readying to go. He rose and Anthony behind him like a shadow, followed him into the street and began to speak timid-hopeful, but the man stopped him, saying,

"I do not discuss religion." "Neither do I," said Anthony. The man held off in reply as if he were measuring for a punch; then spoke slowly, word by word, breaking each over Anthony with a crash of laughter. "You Atheists can't help yourselves. That's God's curse upon you.

Your minds have no rest, you soothe yourselves with arguments, repeated singsong, lullabies of arguments. You drove your son away with arguing."

Well Anthony knew he should have left the man but he plodded with a stunned spirit at his side, slowly gathering the words for response. He said, "How you love hatred! You feed it all the village, do you not?

Your malice is an old trick. Your ancestors made dolls for shapes of their neighbors and on the limbs pressed the disease that hurt the makers in that part. You, being civilized and conscious of your ill mind, could heal yourself by pictures of my mind ulcered with your maladies."

Anthony returned to the library, found a book, and in it sought to make a tearless burial of his hope. But he could not keep his eyes away from the conning faces. One after another he scanned them, reading from the epigrammatic couplets of the lips and digressions of the eye, dressed with no deliberation, and delivered naked to the soul unto the observer. Anthony shuddered at what he saw, feeling doomed before these men for he would have of them their evil only. He would live among them, one whose world had only a sun that burned him, winds that froze him,

water that choked him, earth that bucked under his stride,
like a wild mustang and bled him with accident.

By day the library shut. The librarian ruled
another desk, taught school, wielded his black-tongued pen-
cil.

He saw, and meant to show the peevishness
that wizened his face and tweaked his voice
as cosmic choler, authentic great-man grutch.
His own Procrustes, he pulled and wrenched himself to fit
a secret self. His dream had dollar trimmings;
best seller novelist, with cuffed hands signing books
that never waited on the shelves; he strolled in autos
and built a house needing an aeroplane to see,
and avenued like a city; picked girls like berries
ripened in the summer of his prosperity.
Into the hollow of every night he writhed upon his rack
(forgetting the honest masters in the library)
on correspondence lessons that would bring
the registered consummation; and met the day,
slobbering sleep from the eye, and unkempt in courtesy,
which he never learned to wear, hoisting it on his head
in coward-cringe before superiors, and showing
ego buttocks to the commonalty.

For Anthony coming to his desk he buried
a deeper head within his files, to raise it to a higher indigna-
tion;
dipped disdain in disapproval when Anthony asked
for employment, volunteer work if there was none for pay,
tossed Anthony an application blank,
blotted wearily over the signature, dropped it through a slot
and with a bored wrist waved Anthony away.

Weeks ran together and Anthony waited,
thinking in the meanwhile of old Eddy, the waiter,
who, when he was left alone, took the hotel job
so that he might be among people, give them food,
"sonny and darter" them and call the world his wife.

He too, wanting to meet people, serving them food,
watching eyes move like jaws.

The grocer's boy told him "Everybody's talking about you,
sir,
about your not being allowed to join the library."

As he came into the corridors, eyes gulped him,
and a sharper stillness, a very glitter of stillness,
shimmered before him, making a cavalcade of his steps,
and his coat rang like armor, and he could scarce whisper
feeling the ears arching for his voice. The librarian,
impatient to deal his blow,
saved him, saying, "I am sorry, sir. The board decided
not to accept your application, feeling it unwise
to have a man of your opinions holding an office
in a public institution." Little, brattish voice,
applauding itself with emphasis. There broke
a united, simultaneous chattering, and from one table
dislodged a single, braying laughter, on which others,
conscious of the ritual, cried a hush.

Anthony replied,

wanderingly,
"Yes, public institutions must be preserved;
they must be kept lifeless and while life is shut out
they will never have the fear of dying. Thank you."

On stumbling, hurrying legs, he blundered out.
Anthony walked, drugged with indignation,
unable now to smile upon the images
that his mind made with humble clowning
to divert him: that he should put a turtle in his heart
for the turtle wears its gravestone on its back,
armed against death with death and animate to the world
only in the grapples of its jaws: that he had stepped
daintily out of an ambushade of pigmies,
but in the road before him, roamed treestaved giants;
lay jungles that, leaning back, shot tigers as from bow
strings;

walked geologic monsters in whose footprints gathered lakes.
But Anthony, sipping his liquorish anger,
in his house, grown maudlin, puddled himself in tears.

Anthony mused on Gibbon, a dishevelled volume in his lap,
"Gibbon was a fat man, coach filling, enormous, a paragon
for Dutch Aldermen. Fat men are our natural acrobats
with but another belly to balance, in the world.

Good humor is their juggler's poise and poise philosophy.
Therefore, philosophy laughs while fools
grow serious over slapstick and titter over crises.

How hugely does the philosopher enjoy himself, turning
the puckish pages of those ancient joke books—histories—
the one about the Embalmer—Egypt,
the one about the dervish—Spain,
and Rome topples to amuse a fat heir, as into the amphi-
theater

she tossed a world to amuse plump citizens.

I have my own history to laugh at, Gibbon; I see the joke
and am its butt as well as its philosopher."

Anthony stood up.

Summer had been pulling him from his books
with reins of light and a noose of fragrance
and gentle lashes of heat that smartened his muscles.

Summer sugared the air. The sun was hot,
like the slumbering, swollen body of a bedmate.
Summer milked the sea and spread
effusions of nurture over earth.

The illimitable breast of sunlight warmed
innumerable eggs from which bright beings burst.
Between the soil and sky life seethed like an atmosphere.
Summer ridiculed the mind and all its fixtures,
gayer in a puff of wind than all its ironies,
subtler in a little seed than all its systems.
And to Anthony, thought seemed suddenly wan,
languid like the gesture of an invalid; in it
he felt homesick for the earth, desiring

to be so deep organed in the frame of nature
that he would not know its beauty, the sorrowful joy of
which,

in knowing, is the manifest pang of exile.

He was beset by the impudence of happy things.

All day a single cornflower, lithe and unvirtuous,

danced in his window, a John's head in its cup.

Spiders threw everywhere their ropes and sucked on crying
flies.

The machine-mouth of a neighbor's horse cropped, outside,
and flies cropped him.

Anthony avoided his porch; wrens in the pillars bid him
off.

His tree stood gemmed with pears, pearl green.

Winds sauntered here and there. And he could hear,
not far off, water playing among stones.

As he reached the road a townsman cried, "Hello,"
then swift away as if he had forgot himself.

Anthony smiled, "Magical Summer, so rich in life,
rancor can't exhaust its liberality."

The episode, a mere stubbing of his dignity
upon the old stone of man's unkindness,
did not blear his eye toward man, for Summer herself
made man unseemly, a dun, anachronous beast
living before his time, his world not yet created;
hippopotamus of will, ungainly in possession of the earth;
crude in his curveless houses; too large to mix with meadows,
too small to make another earth.

The women stood like heavy bells; only the legs
within the resonant skirts could utter speech and that
vulgarized with secrecy; the men unbeautiful,
like doughty snails wagging
wrinkled jaws and hands out of their woolen shells.

Children alone, only the shrill running children
fitted the Summer, adding the masked pink of their skins
and the burnishings of their bright young hair
to Summer's colors, and their busy play song to Summer's
sounds.

Fathers and mothers and the ordained herdsmen, ministers
and teachers,
herded them like valuable animals for some yield
(secret, unknown to themselves) a wool of comfort
from the curls of their laughter. For Anthony,
panting in the sultry ill-will of the townspeople,
a child's passage was like a kind gust in a cruel noon.
And as he walked he stopped to watch the children playing,
patting a casual head, and drawing with the touch
a gush of sweetness that retold the platitude
that love has no death within the body, though the mind
bury it within the thousandth resignation. The road
went quickly to town, became street, left trees for spotted
awnings.

Here the sunlight, undrunk by leaves, rose into flood.
Children and birds made the town natural,
swimming the sun. Children peeped from tumbled door-
ways

like pippin apples in old trees; they ran the street like vines.
Anthony heard a boy sobbing, looked for him, found him
sitting

solitary on a curb, his feet in swill, his head rattling on his
chest

with hiccup moaning. Anthony bent over him, hushed him
and asked the reason. The boy, upjerking an abashed face
fenced by a shoulder, denied the tears that petalled his eye,
then poured a fresh spout that bubbled to his mouth
and wilted all his words, and Anthony made the old, mature
pretense

of understanding, crooning "there, there" until the boy,
comforted, looked up to Anthony like a begging squirrel.

And he felt in his pocket for a larger coin to buy
the honor of an ample Providence. But his stale fate,
with a hand hardened upon him, struck upon his hand.

A woman's voice blasted from a window "Arthur!"
and the boy shrank back, and when she reached the street,
she whirled him behind her, a mother beast, her brood
defending, blood reddening her, making wattles of her
cheeks.

"Go on along, Atheist! Don't aim to corrupt little children. Don't you go stealing God out of their hearts! Go away!" Her screams posted through the town. Windows ran up. Heads butted out; women patching nudity with kimono ends;

whole families clustering; fearful voices hauling children up from the ravaged street; dogs dinning; and Anthony stood still

until the friendly grocer's boy led him away, babbling over and over to himself, "I cannot speak to children!"

He sat like a paralytic, still and stiff in his chair and scared the grocer's boy out of the house. After a time he feebly sought a book, but the pages broke under his eye like anthills and sent the words swarming.

A little cliff of volumes rose beside him on the arm.

At last, with a smile that was a genuflection to his ill, he took up a book of pictures, copies of splendid paintings. Even these his eye brought barely whole to his mind.

Portraits marched on, pride tireless in parade wearing medals of women's beauty and wrapped around and hooded grandly with castle walls and turrets; from these

to a landscape, the face of the world rouged with storm, and after it, a hundred angles of the pivotal body of woman, inclining to promised heavens, declining to certain deaths, wine and blood for lubricants and music for its creak.

Anthony stopped over a tavern picture wherein

men guzzled and winked at decanter-breasted barmaids.

"It is a cheat," thought Anthony. "With what smoke and ash

they pay for this little flame!" He turned the page, then turned it back,

kindled over it, saw himself among them, avoiding

his fellow's napkin sleeve perfumed and brocaded with

the grease of a hundred tables. Topper among toppers,

he pledged them, and brimming with alepomp made a speech that fetched the "ahs" of the barmaids.

"I will do it," thought Anthony.

"I will mate my blood too with wine to beget me the increase of a boisterous dream." He called to his serving woman. "Order a pint of brandy." "For tomorrow?" "For to-night!"

"I will get it at once," and her voice was fresh with pleasure. "And I will have a barmaid, too," thought Anthony, and was annoyed and frightened that the thought had found ambush in his mind.

2.

Every afternoon this woman came to do the housework and cook a dinner for Anthony. Finding him absent, within himself, she only feebly tried to be fit company, and soon with a windy voice singing, as if she were alone, the latest dancing tunes blew him beyond her. Nor did Anthony wholly love his exile.

Always, in pondering it, he blessed the chance that brought it.

But it jailed him in vacant leisure, lost him in inanimate peace in which his mind had nothing living to live upon.

Often Anthony found his toes tapping out the beat, as if on his own feet, maugre his set will, he followed her on the adroit windings of her voice. At these times he was the dolt duped in mysterious ignorance, still childish, and never to know a sweet fulfilling wisdom that simpler minds grew into.

She was the animal fullgrown, and he was still child to the man that was yet to be, and child to the animal.

She was a widow not older than thirty; thought good looking, and she gave the thought formality with streaks of rouge and casts of powder and a false gilt in her hair

and showcase dressing that polished her roundness like an eggplant.

The railroad killed her man. She had made Death handsome with her weeds

and tuneful with her weeping, and outlived the death quickly though she had loved her husband well and joyously, as all knew,

who had watched liquor ebb between them and rise again in large limbed fondness, who had seen them grub together in the garden and spied them on the road in horseplay with each other,

their fishing poles knocking and a kiss to settle all their scores.

She was too honest for pretense. She would not haunt herself

with memories and when her spirits rose, spoke them out in laughter.

Soon men were in her house and a constant pennant of music

flew from her window and she danced and drank as fresh

as a girl and fearless as a wife whose body marriage

has uncaged. "Her widowtime will be a short one," the village said,

and at first all the bachelors from five towns round

came courting her. But one by one they dropped away

to marry where they were bought and where they were plighted.

A clot in a phlegm of marriage, fat on the paunch

and furrows on the brow, marsh bloat of body

and drouth crack in the mind, each kept a tablet up

for ready desecration. "Twas I that made her whore.

Should I have married her? Not me. If she could give me wedding meat

before the wedding, after it I'd get the gristle and the horns.

Thanks for the fun and double thanks for the warning, says I,

and she cries after me. Lord, how she cries!" and over pageants of

limb spilling bodies and simmering eyeballs, the coddled
wives applaud
and slap the thigh that routed out the harlot and quaff up
the tears,
and each dull home is bright a moment with their sparkle.

The mind digests its memories. Fear had been given feed-
ing on this love,
and it became that porous skin of fear, contempt.
Not a sound mind among them in which the memory might
have grown
a sinew taut with melancholy over love forfeited
leading attuned bodies, as a treasure might be found.

She wanted any man to sing with, dance with, drink with,
lie with;
after the music had paired them and the drink vaped off
their hesitations
and the moment come to grit the eyes, quench light in
drowning darkness,
to dive from music unto the roar of running blood, to clench
over the last task of pleasure—
labor of millstones, man and woman, grinding out the little
grain of ecstasy—
the utter labor, whose pure, sweet exhaustion is a mysterious
grant of nature,
a bemedalling with ribbons of gay weariness, of all the driven
muscles.

She was too honest for pretense. When passion found them
together and alone
she used the occasion and loved the man, and would have
loved him always
had he not let go the good given for the trifle filched away.
Unhappy and wondering she watched the men running out
like thieves with her gift.
And soon by that crow's confederacy that men connive, seek-
ing love carrion,
circling the sinking woman, they brought her to die as woman
to be left,

(they thought), that corpse of woman—prostitute. But
there was within her
an invulnerable joy which served her for a conscience and
gave
a charter of delight to all vicissitude. The men who sought
her
could not bite and depart. They drank deep, perforce sang
out, danced high,
and with a spiteself courtship throned her aloft on such a
pitch
of womanhood as gave acknowledgement of a high birth of
nature, more rare
and estimable than the natural nobility of youth. Those who
came
jingling money in their pockets found no market and until
their throats jingled had no dwelling of her body; the fearful
left her colder in the loins than as they came, and those for
whom
love was a pleasant stool, found doors behind them, and
music at their ears
taught other meanings.

For her support she worked readily
and well,
as she had worked for years at Anthony's, and even in her
work
she could not cool her voice of singing, nor tire the dance
out of her legs.

The brandy came to table and with it the resinous woman
whose pap juice it might be. Unbidden she sat down, taking
her let
from the slip seat perch of Anthony, and got her warrant
from a smile
that his lips picked up in pain and could not hold. He
dared not be alone.
His mind stood stiff in that quaking street; the child
grabbed up,
all the children herded off, out of the fabulous wolfjaw

of his fabulous unfaith. In grisly surgery a knife split
through,
neat amputation of a social limb, and he rose crippled
in a human part, and profuse cut arteries of dignity
spilled out a blood. Only a human body could bandage
him.

Alone he would have made a poison of the brandy. He looked
to her,

"Save me" speaking from his dumb mouth and endless eyes.
And she let pity serve for understanding, smiled to him
coily

as if he were a Samson humoring her with meekness,
helped him at his spoon, giggling like a pranky girl, then
sang

her usual songs and clucked like a happy mother to hear
him hum along.

And he sang out to the very ceiling of his voice, glad that
he could follow her

words and air on tunes that he had tried to deaf himself
against.

They drank. Anthony, straightened from his totter, grew
gallant size,

said toasts all fat with flatteries, and in whose honest grease
the oil of a long word and bacon of a jest, the woman glis-
tened

and paid him back with such a potion of esteem,
as made brandy its water in the glasses that he drank.

They rose to dance. The woman beat out a tune in her
shallow, loud child's voice.

Anthony let himself be led, his thighs along her thighs, his
chest

floor for her breasts capering, his arms as with sunlight
burning

to the feel of her substance—folding over him, not shrink-
ing away,

embrace lapping over embrace. They danced until they
reached fatigue,

crossed it to come upon another strength. They lay abed,
their heads

quite out of a window. Blue night, curtained with gauzes
from the moon
spread them a spacious chamber, and the wind, brushing
banjos in the grass
ringing in the bell-lofts of the trees, played them a prothalamium.

The dawn discovered them, and then the neighbor's horse
coming for the long grass
outside the window, and then the neighbor coming to hitch
the horse
to a wagon load of truck going to town, and then the town
itself
hearing of the two heads, brown and gray hair together,
ruffling in morning air,
lying in the window, strange mushrooms in the cracks of
an old house.
And so the world knew, before the two heads shrank from
the scorch of sunlight
into awakening, into precipitate noon, seeing each other but
not believing,
seeking an eve of memory for this too solid dream, finding it,
and half fearful of its loss, begging its stay within the begging eyes,
and answering together in a new embrace that gave two
bodies to the vision.
And townsmen on the road at noon, spying from under their
broad straw brims,
saw a horny gaffer and a salt bitch (good epithets of misunderstanding)
with bulbs of shoulders, strained out of nightgowns, pressing together
doing adulterous duty on the broad sheets of day.
Steep in the town's eye hung their picture in the window
frame
and quick fancy furnished forepiece and afterpiece enough
to paint
panels for Bourbon voluptuaries, for all their walls.

The diligent session of gossip, the meeting without adjourn,
by unanimous burgher vote, the highest honors of sin conferred,

and robes of Satan's seneschals, on Anthony and his lady.

Here was the picture, promising like a movie still:

"A scene from the orgy," "The morning after the night before,"

"The morning before the night." Could honest, hearty old believers

in Sin majestic, multitudinous, guess or if they guessed, believe

what 'prentices in vice they were, no more deserving
Mephisto mantles than the town's two dullest bedmates;
believe the window portrait only itself portrayed, and was
no Versailles bergerie to rhetorize the damask pastures
and its priapic shepherd, of the deep sintropic bedsteads.
Our lord lechers, were the truth trusted, would be dubbed
knave cheats.

While in the house, unwise of their fame abroad, they loved
like unwatched simpletons.

Obedient days spread round them as if they had estates in
Time.

Morning bowed in to Anthony through door and windows.

He looked out to the sitting hills not to seek company in his
loneliness,

as he had done before, but cheerful now, feeling himself
their host,

donning the noon's vestment of sunlight, calling tree shadows
into the house,

picking the blown leaves and reading their messages.

He did not pinch a book now, to shake the writer living
from its pages,

but spoke to him standing upon the balcony of the book.

No longer fencing his ear upon the woman's singing,
it became a scent among the sounds fragrant to his ear.

And she dropped her note to the quiet croon of contentment,
wrote valentines into her housework which erased
memories grown illegible—the old house undergoing

renovation by new life. Like early weeks of wedding
went these weeks. Ranging a square of garden hired from
their neighbor,
the woman worked the soil in the morning, dozed out the
midday,
came in silken with sunlight at dusk, bathed with Anthony
at the spring,
served smoking dinners touched with yellow spires of brandy,
set the newly bought victrola going, sang and danced. On
fine nights
they left the house behind them filled with sentimental
music;
sat, steeped in each other's warmth, upon the porch floor.
Cool coils of wind bound them warmer, tighter to each other.
They watched
the night, the moon tearing ruddy navel strings being born
on the horizon out of tumultuous thighs and washed by
clouds.
Lineaments of the world gilt over in the shine of day, the
night disclosed.
The trance of evening kept them as on a lower floor of
sleep
sometimes to the opening of the day, when the sparks of
stars
blew all together into the one flame of the sun.

Anthony now and then joined the woman in the field, but
most
he sat at home reading; and when the book grew listless,
wrote,—
a new thing for him. Modesty, and worse than modesty,—
pride,
which could not bear the awkward service time
of learning, had held down his hand. Many foetuses of
books
he had given pauper's burial in the fireplace. Now,
ambition having been survived like other childhood ailments,
and peace, sedative to wry self-consciousness, being his,
he wrote, placidly for his amusement essays and remarks,

observations, souvenirs and inventions, and by increment unnoted, found himself well within a book.

For audience he had the woman and she supplied shrewd
 notes
 to furnish out the figures. His words sewed liveries for the
 villagers
 by which the world would know them, and she enjoyed them,
 smiling
 at the justice humor of the sly demotions but always adding
 disrobing testimony that shrivelled off the uniform.
 As if she were remembering aloud she told off origins,
 mannerisms, accidents, acts, conditions, residues of the past.
 Each mention flashed with a beaming clarity, as if it came
 down
 washed of the grime of motive from a clean and cosy shelf.
 "It will be good to rest in your wholesome memory," thought
 Anthony,
 "for what you recall of men shows that you have a purer
 learning
 than is mine. You know what men are. I know only what
 they may be
 and are now. You have the knowledge of kinship, judging
 with an impartiality
 of love. You grant men stakes in a great, gross goodness,
 disclosed in casual gestures like metal scratched with a ray
 of light.
 I see them as I am myself, all ill with growth pain which is
 the doom
 of mankind, never to consummate its maturity in a man's
 life,
 so that the comprehending whet themselves stoics on de-
 spair
 and the others crouch in dumb suffering, or feeding on fear
 become holed
 with worms of superstition. Only a few like you banquet
 on the body
 honoring the five senses like noble guests, and only a few,

among whom may I be counted one, take pleasure in the
mind
which goes abroad in the unknown, not sadly like an outcast,
nor like a pilgrim making more credible prayer of pain,
but a blithe traveler whom new understanding exalts
like new skies. Seeing me endure the rigors of pitiless ideas
you shiver and cheer me as if I were an ice hacked Arctic
venturer;
while I, knowing not men but ideas and idols of men, feel
beggarly and weak
before your fearless and abundant love which has risked
injury so often and has so disposed it that it does not even
cast
its shadow into forgiveness. Thus we are woven in a peace
of mutual respect, more enduring and more actual than
any peace,
plunder of victory and theft of treaty after a war of argu-
ment."

Thus, they who had become worn to unhappiness, happiness
came to them;
who felt of joy that it was outlived years before youth, joy
came to them.
Timid hands they reached to their pleasure, spectators of
themselves enfolded
with undreamed dream. Even when they stood steeped in
bliss,
fire catching through all the conduits of the nerves, they
trembled,
thought out of their words, moaned under their laughter,
winced in their embraces,
accepted ecstasies like hypodermics charging their blood
and kept a doomtaste of its end in an insoluble capsule of
melancholy
rolling, spit-soured, and always on their palates. When
their dread
kept faith with them, they met it wretched enough, but un-
surprised although it came
treacherously in a feint of happiness.

A letter postmarked from the town
addressed to Anthony from the minister, a cunning letter,
it slew
with a smother of honey, gathered by a theatrical bee of
reason.

"Your living with the woman is a simple thing for you. I
can see

that you may even hold it moral. It needs religious light
to see the black on a conscience; that light I will not hold
to you,

for having blinded the spiritual eye you would writhe
under it

like night things uncovered to the sun. Even the people in
the town

know this and do not blame you. But they blame the woman.
She is not like you. Religion holds her and in its light
she sees

the shadows of her acts. She cannot hide from it, nor can
she shade it

with her sin though she throw against it all her body.

Always she violates herself and suffers the agony of the
violation.

I have had dealings with too many people, living against
their conscience.

I know them well. Their minds live in an unbreaking storm.
The sun never shines. A cold wind sucks their hearts. The
clouds

creak like sagging ceilings. Terrors gash the soul like
lightnings.

This is her life. Surely you do not have to see her weep to
know it.

Shame has its secret blush on features never faced to you.
She may seem happy.

And if it were not for your sake, it would be for her own
that she would feign happiness. Remember the fervor
with which we all jig to outdance pain. She is not safe
from herself.

And the townspeople are not patient with her as they are
with you.

When she passes they turn away. They shoot their whispers in her back.

Her conscience would be well drugged to sleep this through. She suffers much, and more because she is strong and endures it.

Thus she is spared neither by herself nor by the world. It is not just

to expose her to these trials. A small act can save her,—a formality to you, a piece of paper and a recitation.

You yield as much in compromise and energy in shopping. Yet this small act,—your marriage—brings peace to an invaded mind.

Like a land rid of armies she will face you with plains of sincerity.

You love her little or much; I do not know; but if you felt for her

no more than gratitude for comfort, you owe her this small help

to give her back her dignity before the world.”

Anthony finishing the letter was glad the woman was not there.

Through the windows he could see her bending in the corn beautifully moving; could hear her singing featly, her voice playing a game, tossing and catching light balls of sound.

Ripe in a ripe world, a reaper not seeing the sickle at her back.

He knew he had breathed poison from the letter. Now when she paused

he would think it cramp of conscience; when she danced, flight before the summoners of conscience.

To her walking in, he spoke quietly, “I have been thinking that since in our own way

we are married and have the good of marriage, it will be wise

to take the credit for it from the world. Let us marry formally.”

Anthony flinched to see the sudden, stinging ruddiness jump to her cheeks

and her embrace that broke its passion in a hundred sharp
 caresses
 he endured like a beating. In macerating gaiety he jingled
 "We'll get a ring in a five cent store. I'll have a flower for
 my buttonhole.
 We'll go to the courthouse and set down in the public
 register
 that we do what men and women do, and mean to do it as
 long
 as we are able—so help us God! Then fee the official pimp
 and take it back in bed space in the public park." Anthony
 seeing
 fear start in the face of the woman broke off the jest.
 He spoke seriously to soothe her and so soothed himself.
 "Marriage would bring peace;
 it would offend no principle for it is the right of society
 to have a record of important acts in the lives of its mem-
 bers."
 At dinner they toasted their new status and after it sought
 rest
 in weariness of dancing, and fell into a cavernous sleep.

The day brought heat and a hard, hot rain like cinders
 split by the crevice flame of lightning. It was relief
 and anguish both for Anthony for it halted the grievous
 step
 that must be taken. Delay is a festering. He felt it mor-
 tifying him,
 while he sat in his corner writing, opposite the corner where
 the woman
 sat at her needle. It was his reply to the minister. "Dear
 Sir:
 I hope your conscience is in health, that you have not had
 the misfortune to enjoy your dinner. I write to thank you
 for your kind intrusion which has brought us both an excel-
 lent ill morrow.
 We have concluded to be married and will come before the
 magistrate

washed and clothed all virginal to match the new cloth of
our wedding.

We will rejoin your jungle, uttering our caw of reverence.
I know the pleasure this will give you. Once I collected
books.

One old book, searched out of garbage, saved from fire,
picked from ignoble garret bedding
shook me with most amorous spasms of cupidity.

Now come to you two souls, the most precious, damned souls,
by universal witness, in these slippery parts.

The very horns of the Old Master are sealed solidly in all
their corners.

A pleasant evening for your inventory; and when you enter
them,

two added to three hundred and twelve adulterers,
see if you have made a place for the soul of him who covets
his neighbor's peace."

Anthony listened for a wagon on the road, heard one,
charged through the brambles of the rain and gave his letter
to the driver; then as the wagon drained out into the flue
of the road

was wild to get it back and stood stewing in an inward
broth of terror

until the wondering woman called him in.

The next day grew listlessly around the half visible core
of sun.

Mist flooded the valley, staggering men with its unseen
surf.

The woman dressed to go to town. In a long, unhappy
kiss

they both confessed their fear and offered consolation. She
left

a wilderness in the house. Anthony fled into the friendlier
field

carrying a book by habit. He climbed the nearby ridge
whose other slope

had the township in its lap. His eye coiled rapidly around
it

in a malevolent siege. He wanted to see the woman walking
home
although he knew that even younger eyes could not make
figures out below
(fuddled as they were in mist) except as moving gravel on
the road.
At moments a perversion of the senses, intoxicate with distance,
wished him to leap over the pinnacle into the town, his
shudder having
a crisp edge of pleasure. He felt himself falling and braked
himself
with thoughts upon the town, pellets hard as his hurtling
body.
They would not welcome him unless he came to them part
corpse.
Ragged town, strewing the green flank of the earth with its
litter,
roofs like scraps of paper, its obscene trickle of streets;
what a blessing
if the stern cliff moved out its awful heel and crushed it!
On this bare rock bordering on three sides provinces of
death
wherein, alone, a man had perfect franchise, Anthony stood
a long time and when he turned at last to the descent
his feet, dragged downward, felt beside the usual leash of
gravity
a tether of circumstance added. Something stayed his
homegoing. He knew
the trial that waited for him in his house and he must gather
fortitude,
dig deep into memory and draw the virus of old wraths into
his blood.
He found a new wrath chafed up by the disturbance which
turned him
almost fiercely to present peace. He plunged into forget-
fulness and stopped
to fondle wild flowers, living like mice in the forest's sun
chinks.

He admired before him the tiger valley striped with mountain trees.

The flying stream downswopping on the wing of a waterfall a long time held him. He saw it afar, flashing back the sun. He came to see it near, its plump banks daisyrippled, thrusting to his eager nostrils the mother smell of earth; twenty feet across and five feet deep of lucid, leaping water. And Anthony watched the flicker of little fish, the plunge of frogs and turtles,

the stones rounded on the lathe of the constant current, the digital roots of trees, clutching the banks like divers. Over it fell its rich, green cloak of shadows with fringes fluttering

and turning sequins of sunlight. He wanted to touch it like a lover

and lay on his belly over the bank, dipping his hands into the wild

coolness, and the current bending his palm was like the flank of a shying animal. He rose feeling through his body the going on of life and a peace refreshing like a cool drink. He heard the light wind flowing through the trees. In the wood's green night

the birds beset his sight with rocket dartings, his ears with stone sieved song.

He stood beside tall juts of rock, capes of the stonecore of the world

bucklering the solving sea of life, invaded by spray of grass and pools of moss and trickle of soft worms. He read its colors and its seams

and followed it to its sinking in the earth. Still he waited.

Now he was at the terrace of the hill. He saw the round, mown land

studded with hayricks and alive with grazing animals and gleaning men,

and the tall clumps of late corn and hollyhock and sunflower garnishing

the solid houses. His own house stood behind a screen of trees.

His slow step, merciful to the caterpillars underfoot, was not slow enough.

His house, wing and porch front, nudged his covert eye.

He stepped back,
sat down against a boulder, yielded to the fondling of the windy grass

and ran into the book in his hand for a refuge. He sat reading

until the light dried off the page. Then, abandoned by the day, he walked

into the house. He thought he saw the woman running in from the doorway

at his coming—a bad omen—and when he faced her he knew how his letter

had doomed them. A jackal was in her face. Her eyes were hunting.

The minister had set her to catch him. She drew his head into her breast

soft and infective with stupor, while her face stalked his body.

She said, "Let it be a real wedding in church, my darling."

He flung away her arms, looked into her desperate, crouched eyes

"I know, I know," he screamed, and his fists drummed on his breast.

"I have drawn the insatiable beast upon me, myself given him the scent.

He has possessed your mind, and made you his teeth and his claws.

I know how he waited for you, rubbing his swindling palms and ogling heaven. And he told you it is his doing that we are come

to marriage and God's doing that we met, for God too, mysterious are His ways,

counters the devil at dangling woman bodies to the loin jawed soul.

And then he set upon you his swarm of Sunday madams, the sphinxes

of the village, and you forgot their hardness and their hatred,

their kicking glances in the street, over a cup of tea and
crumbs of cake
and dry voices at the ancient incantations of gentility.
Then you left me." A silence followed and the words "then
you left me"
crackled like a running fire kindling inflammable dust in
the debris
whirling up from their shaken minds. The woman sullen
with weariness
turned upon him at last. "Think what you will. Make big
things out of small.
Calling a thing a bad name does not make it bad. I am
not like you.
You can live in a hole in the woods reading more books than
you meet
people. It hurts me to be hated and despised. For a long
time
I didn't care. But we are old. When you do not believe
in God
I am afraid. I say to you, let us marry in church, do it for
my sake,
but it is for your sake I ask you to do it." "For my sake!
I will tell you
what it will mean to me so that you will not brood upon me
like a mother coaxing her sick child to swallow medicine.
It stands no more to our neighbors that I have not God in
my heart
than that I have no radio in the house. They begrudge me
the luxury
of a free mind which they cannot afford because it must be
earned
by bravery and labor. They are such cowards they spy
upon themselves
and keep a soul in hiding. They have never stretched the
muscle of their minds.
They have swathed it in blotched old coats of superstition.
They live by rote, know life as duty, custom, law only, and
gape at choice
as if it were a bad dream, and when choose they must, be it
their own coffin,

they follow fashion, gratefully. And they love the rich as
only
poor men can; their very envy is a psalm of adoration be-
cause
riches can be gained by cruelty and dishonor, as they think,
and poverty
has made them cruel by cruelty and base by dishonor. There-
fore the rich
are their images enlarged heroic. But I enraged them.
They do not know the wealth of freedom, which could un-
bolt their poverty;
that a man must make himself precious to be rich,
that body and mind might draw a constant income of wis-
dom, play and beauty.
Today I surveyed my estate. My senses were collectors.
What rich accounting
eyes and ears made. My nostrils staggered with the bounty.
My skin
wore sunlight and wind, and where could you find goldener
brocade
and softer silks. And my mind heaped up mortgages
of contentment and ever valid bank notes of ideas.
I could add my books which are thereof a minted currency.
And your villagers have no hope of this. Cruelty and dis-
honor
cannot gain it, and it shows no snatch edge to the thief's
hand.
'He must give it up,' they say. My own son who made
himself so poor
disheriting himself of life's birth gift of passions
that a beggar relishing his scraps lives more nicely,
he too tried to force it from me. What he did will take
a soft-hearted God, unless He perjure Himself, to forgive.
The villagers have tried me much. They have used insult
and provocation.
Now because I love you they seek to make you the purchase
of my touchless riches. And I could have given up all for
you
freely and gladly, for your love reached me like light.

I opened my heart and you came. But now you would be my possession, and I have learned to value only that which may not be

possessed. You would be light no longer, but a lamp wherein I would burn to give me light.

I will not give up. Go you back and tell them.

I will not give it up. But I will share my riches merrily with them. They are welcome. Let them come out with me and load themselves with treasure. And I will love them the more

the greedier they are for the great acres of sunlight.

They can mine unending treasure with boring eyes and ears and if they can make their heads roomy, store it there.

They could worship wonderfully with me. They could praise God

more livingly with rolling eyeballs eloquent to horizons and rose-addressed nostrils, a service more precious to Heaven's ears than psaltery. Let them have no hope of saying of my body, caged in their church and pacing the coiled prison walk of penance, 'Hooray, here is the free one,

chained; the wise one, witless; the rich one, beggared.

He is no better than we; he is more miserable, and we can laugh at him, for he has honey sins to rue, and the hounds of memory, scenting forever his cast, smoke his back with their hot breath; they gnaw his sleep; their cry raids forever the quiet of his mind.'

Tell them their church will never have me."

"Don't say that. You said now you loved me.

Would you give me up so easily?" The woman wept.

Her sob made discomfort in the room. He had turned aside with a flick of lashes the plea of her grief lame eyes, of the tear pox on her cheek, of her sorrow saddled shoulders; but he could not turn aside the slow, thick, jetting sobs that gave to misery the whole body of alive, immediate air.

He was seized with a nausea of pity, and he ran out into the soothing darkness, and sat down watching his house with its thorns of light. He came back to meet

the woman standing, all her strength returned and wielding
rage red cheeks and hissing eyeballs. Vehement spittle stung
him

as she screamed, "You aint a man. There aint a sound gut
in you.

You have no fight. You ran away from the town.

Someone said 'boo' and you shot up the woods and said
'hello'

to the birdies. If someone told you a crow's caw meant
'get the hell out of here,' you'd turn around and scoot to
town again.

You could have had me and all the things you blab about,
sunshine gold and moonshine silver and the wind overcoats
and the freedom of your soul, if you had made a fight for me.
You gave up cold. You're no good to me. You're not a
man."

Then she laughed hideously, the laugh of punishment and
the scalding laugh which human beings use
for antiseptic on raw wounds of the mind. Anthony
cringed under it. He said nothing for a time. And when
he spoke

his voice crumbled the words. "Perhaps you're right.

I suppose I don't fit your meaning of a man. We have
different ones.

We have made an old mistake together. What we thought
was mutual understanding was our mutual mistake.

When we stumbled into love you thought you had dug up
a man

out of the dust of books. And I thought your instinct
outsaw knowledge,

that it was the very kernel of wisdom, that our luxurious
moment of abeyance

was an act of understanding. We gave ourselves the joys
and shirked the labors. We did not build a mutual under-
standing

of substantial knowledge, and when our surfaces rubbed
together

we said, 'behold, we are interpenetrated!'

We raised a frail thing, vulnerable to wind,

that the town's jostle overthrew, but it stood
in no danger from us, for our souls are no trampers
and we might have lived in it, holding it to be a strong fort,
all our life together. But the townspeople's shoulders
made a jest of it. They have happiness and peace of mind
to account for, and now they have my love against them.

Nor do I lose it as easily as it looks to you. For the little
time

that is left to me for memory will be full with the brewing
of bitterness out of sweetness. And many days will pay with
longing

for the happiness of each day of these beautiful, brief
months."

Several times the woman moved her lips, but could not speak.
The loading silence each instant weighed further down their
speech

until it kept them even from utterance of good nights.

Shallow, stony night, falseface of death, mock you the weary
with the stuffless pillow of silence and threadless covers
of darkness! Light minds can bed and think you bottomless
but the full mind scrapes your narrow sides and mauls its
bones.

They lay in the one bed, tenderly separate as if they were
each other's sore.

Each crushed the other, though they were parted by space
enough

for bedding of a bridal, though they were shrunk to each
outermost edge.

Consciousness, like a vast swelling out of the flesh, touched
them together

and the touch charged them with the electric of mutual
suffering.

The callous air stood hard. The core of darkness, sun of
the inferno,

blinded with black rays, licked them with mouthing heat.
There was a drouth of sleep. On their self-consuming lids
fell no drop of sleep. Sweat washed them for burial.

And so their bodies, rotted down to seed, inflamed their loins.
And at the one moment they reached for each other's flesh,
the available drug,
and wielded delirium, mercifully, upon each other.

The dawn came and ate the night, the suntongue at the horizon.

Anthony, risen and attired, walked out, his hand around a book.

Rapid blisters of tears breaking in her eyes, the woman stopped in her packing, often, to luxuriate in grief.

Her bundle made, she walked out, down the road slanting craftily to town. She endured the stare of neighbors in the field,

the sorrowing eyes of Anthony, hidden in the trees.

Anthony saw her. His eyes drained after her down the road.

"She will return," thought Anthony, "our folly will have its end."

"I will return," thought the woman, "he will call me back."

She told the minister the day's happenings, making a mirror for them

in new tears. "A bride's tears," said the minister.

"This is a good beginning. That he is so much shaken is more than I hoped." An elder came in. "Old Anthony's caught"

said the minister. "We will drink to the bride." Glasses chirped,

"To your marriage!" The woman chattered with ecstasy.

"Let her stay in your house for the day," said the minister.

"Anthony will come for her tomorrow." The elder led her to his house.

His wife was away. The elder patted her arm. "Come, let us visit some friends

and spread the good news. We will find my wife when we return."

He took her to a bachelor's house. In the hallway his arm crept about her. "Anthony's a lucky one," he said. They opened the door.

Three men rose from table. "Good," said the elder, "all
here
for the celebration. Good news! We will have a wedding
soon.

Let's toast the bride!" The four drank to her marriage.
She drank to her marriage. They ate a wedding fore-feast.
Dusk came and ate the day. First the elder had her
and went home, a tune belching on his mouth; one by one
the others.

The woman rose in the morning. She stared at the body
next to her,
snout deep in sleep. She screamed. From another room
a man called, "Come here, dearie." Despair, cold as death
ran into her body and after it, rage hot to murder. Her
hand
found a bottle, clubbed the sleeping head. Blood rose and
waved
its dark crapes. The bottle dropped into clamorous frag-
ments.

The sleeper opened red eyes into a dawn of blood, reared
with rearing pain. From the other room the man rushed in
and beat her. She left them bandaging each other.

She watched the streets a second day, a third day, waiting
behind a wall of the outermost building where Main Street
became open road. She watched for Anthony. If he came
for her
she could go away complete in her tragedy. But if he stayed
back,
shrunk to his solitude, happy perhaps to lose the cares of
a lover,
then their love had been but a bawdy tale, her tragedy
demeaned
to a casualty of belief to be corrected by cynicism; nothing
left over for faith but the flesh which one could rear up
for oneself as pleasure's burden beast. Then she could go
off,
cleansed of clotting hope that one man lived different from
others,

and hardened throughout with man hatred to which she
would dedicate

revenges as many as the men who touched her. On the
fourth day

Anthony came. His dark, quiet face wore honestly its plain-
spun suffering.

Hiding, she walked with him. She heard him ask for her.

The words dissolved

a solid in her mind that flooded her with soothing melancholy.

At last a pale puzzle of a face, he went home. She watched
him,

gave his shape to boulders and trees after he had vanished
that she might relish him still on her eyes. Then sadness
was born to her

like a child, a sadness that would grow, change and caress
her.

Sadness phosphorescent with memory would guide her
through the blackness

the townsmen had made in her life, discharging blackness
into it.

Anthony was right: their frail house had been beautiful;
the town

had jostled it down, in her body broken it. At the depot
she sold herself to the nearest city. The train thundered
briefly

over browning land, falling from sight, irrecoverably.

Her life fell past like that, suddenly, irrecoverably.

Like seed out of a pod, the train shook her into the city
to be blown

into a root crack somewhere or into the crow's beak of
misfortune.

Across her goalless tramping capered the inevitable cox-
comb,

clad in conceit, offered his snickerish banter, drew a smile
that sieved her pain had he the wit to see, and laughter
retched from her,

as he took her arm, as if cruel fingers were tickling joints
of her soul.

Villagers coming back from the city brought the good news
of sin
triumphant, told how she walked the streets, how she had
gnarled hard,
how like scored metal was her face. Self absolved, the smiling elder
and his cronies told each other, "Nature was her pimp.
She was a born whore. Might as well try to fit rudders to
destiny
as try to turn a lustful woman out of the road of her body."
Anthony heard of it, built up what happened with the verities he knew
from the lies that reached him. At seizures of indignation
he began
letters to the minister, but stopped himself seeing the futility
into which
they would be cast, as into fire. Once again loneliness held
him in blockade.
He walked out to the world left to him. If he could clasp
a tree around
and she would curl her bark and answer to his listening
fingers;
if birds, reconciled to men, would recite logs of their
voyages;
if the centaurs in the clouds returned to their old vocation
and came down
to teach him; if earth could take him by the feet or hair, root
him and commune
through him with leaf lips with the sun; if he could be a life
in nature and could walk eternally companioned by the
partners,
living stone and plants in meditation and the huge dust of
animals blown
by constant passion, then he might attain peace, and man's
society
could truly be a luxury whose casting off enriched him.
Instead, wanting
men's copresence, he stood more alien to the world. He
could know trees as trees

only, birds as birds only; he could face them stiffly as man,
conscious of
separateness, not as a soul before souls. Going into the
woods
he touched his eye to the hilltop, sipping the cloud whipped
upon it—
an instant only, for the eye turns inward, follows a woman
through already
weedy lanes of memory, over possible journeys going lost on
the horizon;
the eye rises again, finds a node of color but returns to
rummage
costumes of benignity. His life within himself has no
release, needing
another for a circuit. Desperately he realizes his human
need, his failure
in nature. For him too only men lived and other beings were
inanimate,
rotating on Nature's counter for men's handling.

3.

Sun shearer Autumn, tree plucker, wild whistler, all the
land rode;
life into shallows sucked, like a tide dropped away. South
searching, the birds marched
in calling clouds. Leaves spurted in the wind, crackled in
the road
like many small skeletons. The long rains came, stalactites
out of stony cloud. Crests of cold capped everything. Cold
loneliness
grew colder. And even memory grew torpid. He could let
it hibernate
and rise mad in the Spring. Anthony thought, "I am
watching die
my will for happiness. May I find peace!" But loneliness
has not even peace
for company. It is a fatalist that opens gates
to the ghouls of memory and the buffoons of desire.

His day passed like a dream of weariness. He felt no longer
master of Time
but its victim. Time's transpirations gouged him out
like a gourd. He must find something to cog with his mind
and set it on the spacious swoon of motion. He tried wood
splitting
against the winter, picked his fruit, offered his hands for
harvest
to the neighbors, only to admit the demurrers of his body.
His hands,
time-sucked, met the aguey grip of weariness.
If I could read, he thought, and took a book only to lay it
down.
"My mind must fast too," he thought. Stories seemed so
hard contrived,
such Coney Islands of emotion, all thrill and no feeling,
and arguments such meager wars. "You are too old for
campaigning.
You will have to write your own," he thought and remem-
bered he was writing it.
He drew out his papers, read them, smiled, but it was as if
his heart beat again.
These last days had given his story so neat an ending, an-
other work
of the Old Master, Fate Impeccable, making designs in
tragedy.
The writing would be simple, a plain setting down, no
trouble with meanings.

He had comforting peace now. Word by word exorcism of
loneliness.
He was at confessional, talking into the anonymous, patient,
large ear of the Future.
Good labor for the lonely, filling his empty world
with women and men drawn, wincing, back to pragmatise
remembrance.
Lusty labor that in five months built him his book, gave him,
the excommunicado, a passage back to life. Many times he
read it,

laughing, weeping, clapping, nodding his head, yielding
himself alive
to his reestablished world. Urgent, warm words, cellular
thousands
that cubed over him, sheltering him against
the desolation that grimaces with madness, that shudders
with death!
Words that measured men and women, spring and lever
words,
by which the reading eye might keep the events of a lapsed
existence,
shaking through their courses until language itself eroded.
Good book where words worked so well. Anthony had for it
a whimsical
gratitude, the pride of a saved man in the strength of his
savior.
"It would become me," he thought, "who have seen sixty
years
of the world's indifference, to chide my book and for its
deprecation
call upon the tired endurance of all observing history. A
world
which has seen races of animals and men reduced to geologic
fingerprints,
cities kicked up like anthills, freezes and thaws that dredged
out seas
and uplifted continents, epidemics of despair and cancers of
complacency
that have rotted civilizations,—to this world your book is
less
than the hatching of a single fish egg. But what hypo-
critical humility
to admit littleness by a cosmic comparison. My book's
criterion
is nullity, hungry nullity upon which its somethingness
stands
blessedly gigantic. For an old man whose life has ended
so long ago before his death, a book is resurrection, is like
late fatherhood, a proof

of potency. I will take joy in my book, recite it, grow in it.
I will send it
proudly into the world, rolling to the publishers in a coach
of praise
with champing horses of hyperbole and stiff lackeys of
presumption.
My letters will be heirlooms for quoters of grand effront-
eries.”
But though he sat down “to varnish arrogance in ink,” his
letters
made models of modesty and no “parallels of pride.” He
began:
“To the Intending Publisher of literary works; Honorable,
Illuded Sir:
I enclose a memorial to an ineffectual existence, done in the
disguise
of a moral tale, and presenting (as it encrusted itself in
living parenthesis
upon the bodies of my heroine and hero) the history of a
community
upon which daily suns shine, battenng rains discharge, and
emollient winds
blow peace, and over which lean nursing summits with many
teats of springs.
And all in vain, for in it men live who fear beauty, bully
passion into a sneak,
and weave against cool knowledge such tight undershirts of
faith
that their smothered brains die after the last service, of
reasoning into bad marriages.
This book contains the eloquence of hate overfed on causes,
a litigious logic
accusing lawless law, the splendor of love, free burning in
solitude,
unchoked by backdraft of social reference, unquenched by
marriage.
Patient malice has full formed the portraits, recurrent
agony has quickened
the movements of its argument.

Although its author has
 nothing else for voucher
 than the reading of many and good books, its style has
 benefited but little
 (and by atmospheric memory only) by their example, for it
 has formed itself
 by its own outspout, the breathless manner of a man, long
 pent up,
 telling his tale at last for his salvation. Small things I know
 to offer to a public
 for which Celebrity lives glass-housed, teaching anatomies
 of success
 and rubbing the clitoral public eye with pentathlonic
 amours.
 Salesmen will yawn and book clerks, learned in the fashion,
 pass it by.
 Critics, all-wise-twenty-something-old will call it immature,
 true judging ever on know-know-nothing sixty; they will
 assail
 its truths on truths' own oldest weaknesses—clear improb-
 ability.
 Nevertheless, in all boldness I give you this book to print
 against
 your better judgment, against the critics and the great
 back-turning public."

Longer than a month passed. Anthony thought, "I'll make
 an omen of delay:
 My book gets deep consideration. Congresses of critics are
 assembled
 to its judgment. More likely though, the manuscript is
 adding flyspecks
 on a reader's desk numbered among postponable affairs."
 Then came the publisher's acceptance bubble-backed with
 praises.
 "We are happy and proud . . . your powerful . . . origi-
 nal . . . masterly . . . Contract
 enclosed." Stonestill stands Anthony, threading his fingers,
 feeling his nerves blow

into balloons, holding motion and breath, waiting discharge of the afflatus.

"Rejoice, Anthony!" speaks Anthony. "Happiness can still inflame your body.

Your vanity keeps potent. See him strut in his harem of praises."

He declaimed the adjectives: "Mrs. Powerful, rending her tights with bristling muscle;

Lass Original, rustling in newspapers, teetering on the fourth dimension;

Miss Realistic, heavy with child, ready for accouchement before any public;

Madame Restrained, terse to silence, revealed to us only by her creaking hip;

Damosel Sincere, weeping into the loincloth wired and locked upon her body;

Miss Classical, poisoning unabridged dictionaries on her head."

Thus Anthony flogs his happiness. Those days were his "era of letters,"—

six for choosing a title, four for the phrases of an advertisement,

six for the binding and types. The postman told the village, "Anthony

has written a book." "It must be a book against religion"—a fume

of blasphemy from his private sulphur pot. The librarian promised to bar it whatever it might be. Warnings reached

Anthony:

"What iron-spined events may bloom upon the stalk of this adventure."

Came copies of the book bright-bursting the package, bright with elaborate inkstains.

Fingerful, diffident hands of Anthony stumbled over them, stubbed on the pages,

imagining, hastening eyes ran fallingly into the sentences.

He shut the book, that he had written, that he had forgotten, that had left him, that lay far from him in his own hands,—

his book

that would woo and wheedle casual, careless, indifferent
 minds
 and to him turn the alienating, blank face of kinship. "Oh,
 too complete
 and finished book, mine and not mine! Who can measure
 between
 his book and a man, the distance, measure the inexorable
 step, whose print
 falls into beachless sea. Oh book, containing me and not
 mine,
 ripened daughter, tall, beautiful, wardrobed in too literal
 print, ready for marriage,
 you must be surrendered! Go, my book, to the mighty
 uncomprehending!
 I wish you gentle custodians. Perhaps you will be taken
 into society."
 He pushed away the books, sat down at his writing to divert
 himself again
 with "that ejaculation of the ego," "that carnival splutter
 of ink."
 He wrote easily, managing several poems, among them a
 sonnet to God
 that he thought of using for a titlepiece:

Thus on the sky we read His mountain script
 And say "God" too. And let a storm parade
 To drumming trees and windblare and we're made
 Believers. The Unknown that we have gript
 And lost is our surviving mastodon.
 When weariness bends back our limbs and fear,
 Its jackal, turns the hunt on us, we rear
 And look to God, and to His covert run.

For we are artists in cold fear and make
 Great terrors to defend us from the small.
 To the Unknown we block God's vast opaque,
 Which 'tis our will to notknow. Our fires fall
 Meanwhile on stauncher darkness. They will break
 the figment in Time's time, and light the all.

And the epoch of letters passed into the era of reviews.
The book
was being shouted up. Critics were in a mood for discovery
and found him
and fattened up their find with fresh discovery—newest to
Anthony—
symbols, meanings and intentions that gave Anthony respect
for the inventive
genius of reviewers, and praises far outranging praising
publishers.
Miss Significant, dimpled like the moon and telegraphic
with wide smiles;
Miss Revealing, tattooed with the complete text of Madame
Bovary;
Mother Profound, instructing her brood of white headed
children;
Princess Poignant at her dungeon window combing her un-
bound nerves;
Subtle, Stark and Entrancing; and even Madam Epical
suckling monuments.

The town does not believe, yet the great head inclines, the
ear of the nation
touches its lobe upon the hill where the familiar, mild
idiot
named Anthony sputters blasphemy through the fiend's nose
of his pen;
and insatiable the ear arches over the town, hunting afield
for echoes.
Behold the roast round coral cheek of the town corre-
spondent!
(notary by day, church choir tenor and man of the world in
ordinary, being
the coy possessor of the town's single Boccaccio, read in the
beaming cellar
before ballets of bottles and the benign belly of the furnace).
Mark, how
that luminous cheek is scored with rampant ire for he
whose epics of barn burnings and five inch floods line
editorial

waste baskets enow, reads orders from the seven city papers
to interview
whom, but Anthony, chider of churches and unhiding
adulterer! Vain
are his tactful letters, rumorous with Anthony's misdeeds.
Vain his offers of haloesque
portraits of prayer-panting leading citizens. And now new
lusters of rage
burnish that massy cheek; his letters find answer in feature
articles
on Anthony, the martyr, suffering stones of denial and exile
by neglect
and his own home become his pillory. His wrath is but an
instalment;
in the town the growth of grievance is like a fabled tree.
Each hour
a new leaf puts forth, leaves that are barbs, terrible when
the tree
will be shaken. The town's scenic views, mysteriously mail-
ordered
from the general store, return making faces from articles in
a magazine.
"The village made famous by Anthony's novel." Photo-
graphs of the church,
Main Street down to the river, the soldier's monument,
residences on the terrace,
all captioned with nagging paragraphs from the book.
Hatred
badged the town's mind; hatred became the fashion. Scraps
of garble
out of Anthony's writing were given the townsfolk as cast
rags are given
to bloodhounds; the editor held them in stinking hands out
of boxes of editorials;
the minister at his cancelled cross threw them to the up-
turned snouts;
the town's attorney held them up, pinned to possible prose-
cutions;
each great man of the town felt himself the representa-
tive of

the general passion and engrossed the hatred of a thousand in his own spleen.

And more than all, the librarian flourished his hatred;
old, intimate envies nourished it. He had taken for himself the destiny
of the town's writer. Anthony's book came upon him like a usurpation,
and the matter of the book like some black transfusion of his lifeblood.
He too had laid his neighbors in a book, suffocated in a satire whose stench
came from the common sewer. Publishers had returned the book promptly,
allowing polite, consolatory adjectives, "brilliant," "ironic,"—adjectives stored
in his mind like first words of love. One even suggested revisions. And now
Anthony's tree had the sun, and his tree, however engrafted with revisions,
would die of darkness. Young man, poor in youth, he wanted Fame's outer being
as the old suck into their children's fuller lives. Already parasite
on his ambition, he fought for it with more despair than for a limb.
Yet it was Anthony's book that brought him bodily before Glory,—
world mounted lens that mankind turns on men to make them visible.
There stood no speck of greatness in him to enlarge him hero. A flicker, and the lens
found other foci while in his mind immovable memory rolled down and under it
his hope gasped out. This it was that gave him his burrowing, blind
hatred of Anthony, which took him at the name's sound out of the mark of reason
and left him in the infinity of madness. Twice Anthony's publishers made a gift

of Anthony's book to the town library; twice with snuffling
 formalities of rejection
 he returned it. He strutted to his phrases as a hunchback
 king might parallel himself
 to his scepter. The publishers gave his letters to the press.
 Telegrams dropped like leaves
 before him for his Revelation: editors seeking articles, secre-
 taries of pomp-potent companies
 ordering him to make the defense of Faith. The world
 indeed was listening.
 Glory blinked anxiously. The words! The words! Ap-
 plause quivered on uncountable fingers,
 unborn anthologies waited! Inertia, scaled with habits
 (begging language to compress
 all wisdom in a platitude to be ground finally into one word
 restoring
 man, the animal, with his single cry) called to him for its
 anathema with all
 the ancient spellwords,—religion, home, duty, to work their
 craft once more
 and scatter the unquiet imps of change and unbelief. In-
 stead he gave them
 clamorous peevishness, sibilant with envy, that was cast
 aside. Editors, friendly to him,
 wrote disapproving leaders. "To him a snort is thunder."
 And Glory turned her head.

Good hucksters for the publishers: editor, librarian, parson
 and attorney,
 "Thou shalt not read this book," and overcame the prohi-
 bitions
 natural to itself—that it was a book and cost more than a
 hotel dinner.
 Orders from the town came in for copies "to be mailed in
 plain wrappers."
 Reading it each man laughed at his neighbor's portrait till
 he came upon his own,
 then went on fire with fury and ran out to touch off with his
 own flame

the kindle of his neighbor. Rage climbed on rage, flamed
men's tongues
and rams of flames beat down the unseen structures raised
up by the mind;
beat down Tolerance and the Law; and the parodies of
peace, chattered in the pulpit,
shrivelled inaudible in its roar. Lynching and riding on a
rail—there must be
truceflags of blanched suffering or bloodwine to bloat the
eyes.

Letters came to Anthony—threats, warnings. "It will be
best," he thought,
"to face the beast that I have roused. A man's best target
to his enemy is his back;
his very running poises him for downfall. There is no
danger when a mob
looks into mild eyes. And if it is beyond quieting, it is
better to suffer a stone now
than the avalanche it can muster." He went into the town.
Automobiles and wagons,
passing him on the road, paid him whipcrack and honk for
his greetings,
speeded up to bring the news of his coming. Business
stopped. People
lined the street-sides, the Spring sunlight growing into noon,
the light breeze
playing kitten-pranks in the trees had to the eye an ominous
innocence.

Slowly between, Anthony walked, stopping before one or
another of the men who stood
stiff as if they held fierce dogs on leash—themselves; or
before a woman, her child
hushing, frightened by the magnitude of silence. To each
a few words, a gesture,
but drew no answer, and the words ungarmented with reply
shrunk like nude martyrs
in the arena of silence. And now his footsteps drummed
like tom-toms

and his own anger sprang up: "On my hills," he said, into the too clear air,
 "the very trees are more humane: the rocks call back an echo. You are, no doubt, wiser dumb than speaking, but it is too much to believe
 you keep silent out of wisdom, rather because the evil in your mind
 will find no speech but in the evil of your hand. Come! I am prepared!
 Who throws the first stone?" It entered the air; it rang on his forehead.
 Anthony's hand went to the wound and brought to his eyes the charge of blood.
 More stones sprang upon him. He sank down. Through the street ran
 the taming terror of death. Then hideous upon the stillness the voice of madness
 shattered,—"I threw the first stone." The Librarian ran up, threw a last stone on the body.
 They pulled him away, shrieking. The stones in his pocket knocked together.

4.

"Who are you, today?" the asylum keeper asks the grave loon. "'Tis I have made Athens
 great," sputters the sucking mouth. The mass rises, discloses minute legs under
 the weighing belly, holds out a fat, official hand, discharging friendship with the sweat.
 "He is a learned lunatic; drives us to encyclopedias for the names he gives himself.
 When he came here, ten years ago it was, after he killed Anthony
 with a stone, you know, he was so thin, he was like the side of a warped door.
 No wonder; he was all puckered up with his own sourness. Why, the man was
 no more than a wrinkle of a man. Now look at our captive king—has a royal belly

and his smile could grease your car. That's what comes of
the good sense
of letting your wits go when they can't support your wishes.
Doctors might think
more of it, might save the sorrowsick by a sort of amputa-
tion on the brain."

In the town (oh swiftly it forgave itself and whittled its
murder
to a madman and a stone!) only a few, passing Anthony's
statue, wince
under chastening irony, or when they point the way for
strangers to 'the shrine,'—
Anthony's old house on the hill. The town has made the
tale its epic,
a true epic, not written down but told without a hmph's
difference
by the storekeepers. They give you biography by way of
fitness as the statue
is portrait by rote, a face emptied by the frown's drain
of all
identity, turned into a label of gravity and set above the
surer label
of a frockcoat sewed to earth with the broad stitch of
trousers.
They tell it so: First they call Anthony a wise man, a digger
into books,
a man who knew (and therein lurked misfortune) too many
things. Don't ask them
what he knew. You will find him in their answer, only the
ancient bogey-man.
He lived, studying. He mightn't have his hat but his book
was always on him
wherever he went, poking out from under his arm like a
small pet devil; and on the road
that goes to his house, late riders would always have his
window light
and he, black and round over his book, like a tree over its
root, sometimes

into the twilight of the morning. The town saw him little.
His visiting he did in the woods.
You'd see him even in the Winter go looking at the snow in
the trees,
the white edge along the branches, the webs in the forks,
the way men
might see a carnival. It's his strange ways that mark a
great man.
We who are no wiser than our neighbors, who like a man
more than a book
and a town better than a wilderness, will hardly be remem-
bered, and if we are
it will be for the outcrop of strangeness in us, for the special
lurch
we walk with or the way we hang a pipe at our lip. But
the great man,
who likes a book better than a man and the wilderness more
than the town,
his statues stalk over us, his name names our streets, and we
feel as if we are
his people and our sons hold to him like a first father. A
fine thing to think of, but how cold
these great ones get in their loneliness. One would rather
be best dancer at a party,
heaviest eater at a feast, or big winner at a poker—so one
measures
against living men and not against the dead or other men
stiff with the chill
of greatness. Anthony paid for each thing well. For his
learning, he gave up
what you might call his innocence. Your great man feels
that he must give
satisfaction for living.

And though you shift your leg
(seeing the story grow
out of its line of narrative into plains of reflection) and
make deft diversions
of the yawn, that like a fly cruises the muscles of your face,
hear all,

and you shall have from these asides a broader story, to
which the proper tale
is but the heraldry. To wit, the town itself in chronicle:
its something-thousand souls
incorporate and made self-conscious, gangling into manhood,
its hero's coming
for a sign of puberty and with a history authoritatively
begun
in blood. Anthony's dying has not gone unused: has paid
for a monument
and become the town's blackboard tragedy by which the
citizen-atoms school themselves
into self-gowned philosophers, propounding the great man
and his tumorous conscience,
and how he faces its accusal. These are his three defenses:
To become strong so that he may be
defiant, covering himself in hides of wealth or authority.
To make a good thing,
an invention or a work of art and justify himself by its
justified beauty.
Or to seek knowledge by whose means the question may be
cast from him upon
Nature. In all these he abashes Faith. As strong man he
may make Faith his ally,
but his devotion is diplomacy. As creator he blasphemes
Faith, disestablishing
the finality of creation, drawing it into new forms and caus-
ing it to make comments
upon itself. And as philosopher he makes Nature declare
itself to Man.
With Power, Faith lives easily; and of the creator she makes
a privileged domestic,
hiring his hands by legitimising their labor. But with
the philosopher she can live only at her peril. When she
has called him to her house
he has become, sometimes her supplanter, more often her
seducer, causing her
to lose the oneness which is her chastity and multiply herself
into a brood

that slay each other like barbarous dynasts. Anthony was
the philosopher.
Acts of Faith had become to him as unnatural as four-footed
walking. Should there be
wonder that he who questioned God should hold no sacra-
ment? (Not that he himself
had evil in his heart, except his blasphemy which was to him
as the gun is
to the soldier). He lived in what he thought was natural
wedlock with
a woman who had no principled dissent like his. Her re-
bellion was
stupor of drink and the flesh's insistence. And as if it
was the shopwindow
of a new fashion, they closed no shutters in the house upon
their revels.
Passersby heard the song, the laugh bedizened speech, the
thump of dancing;
sometimes even saw the bodies' concourse, the poised haunch,
and felt
the hush, presence of that other sister of Death, the achieved
peace of ecstasy.
Through this woman Anthony made his reunion with the
world. But that
they learned afterwards. Who can tell the beginning's end?
What a laughdown
they'd have given him who had foretold that when Anthony
parted from his last
known virtue, hermit's continence, that he was started on
his return to God!

He was then already in his book. It was meant for a
spacious gibe at God
and men. But his very dealing with them, the life he had
to give them for acting out
his story, showed him more of their reality than he, lost on
his hilltop, ever knew before.
The woman came, raking up his human fire twelve years
cold. And the touch

of her living flesh unlearned his death-aimed wisdom. From
there on the book turned.
Shallow readers, say the villagers, follow the gibe to the end,
but those who read
more than the say of words feel its communion with God. It
is a very Jesuit.
It bribes the learned heathen with their own valuables. As
for the woman
the book tells half the story. It is mainly a grace of grati-
tude fairly due from him.
To a man, desolate, she had given companionship and love,
not making
the one a haggling for the other. He saw her as a bride
without loutish virginity
or the crafts and reckonings of usual marriage. He had
seen beasts and birds
mating, and gave her of their innocence. A woman taking
market price
for a bundle in her apron, that to him was marriage. When
he began to change,
he thought of marriage as a mutual gift and offered it like
an angel.
She taking alarm at the very rumor ran away. For her
an ordered house
meant law for her body, as true a piece of original chaos as
the devil might hope
to see left on earth. Men of the town saw her afterwards
in the city,
in those sweeping corners kept for rubbish women. They
laughed to see
the righting of (to them) an old disbalance. But Anthony
had his grief and devised
his consolation. We have it in the book where the flight
becomes a mystery
of devotion.

Afterwards his sole business was his book. The
villagers
knew nothing of it, first heard of it after it was printed and
thought it

a certain blasphemy since it was the atheist's utterance, and
did not care
until it brought down, as it seemed to them, the whole na-
tion laughing
in their ears. Could they be wiser than all the world and
see its virtue,
when all eyes searched in it their infamy? Could they be
patient and rest,
the world's fool for a martyrdom? Those days run together
in their memory.
They have no nights. They are without periods to divide
one from the other.
There ran up in the people, that swiftest growth, the lethal
anger of the mob.
The least of them grew animal great with wrath, took on
the dignity
of those who may deal Death. Plans made themselves, de-
vised visibly
of their thinking anger. Lynch recruiters signalled at the
windows. The mildest
would have spared his bones, but only after a good bumping
on a rail, taking him
out of the country. And in the midst of it he came calm and
fearless among them,
his white hairs enforcing truce. Someone had told him. He
might have gone off
safely leaving them with undigested vengeance. Who knows?
Fear's thrift has small
reward, though its reward be life. It might have earned him
a few years,
unpalatable from so strong a seasoning of despite and dan-
ger. It would have made
the townsmen ampler fools for being thwarted, and bloated
wisdom out of their eyes
forever with the anguish of chagrin. Destiny chose more
wisely, it may be,
to give him holy Death, and lay on their hearts a sin in whose
atonement
revelation would break open in them.

They feel now that he
came among them
to declare his peace with them and God, but before he could
speak it
the insane one threw his stone. They are most eloquent on
the sequels, how his son,
the famous minister, came from the West and looking in
Anthony's papers
found the poem in which he celebrated his reunion with the
Lord.
The papers had the sermon. It has been made famous by the
poem
which he chanted at the end. But only they who heard it—
a thousand of them sobbing
and seeing his son glorified, as in lenses through their tears
—only they know
the fearful greatness of it. They were made new men by it.
The poem is chiselled
on the monument. But everyone here knows it, listen:

“Thus on the sky we read His mountain script
And say ‘God’ too. And let a storm parade
To drumming trees and windblare and we’re made
Believers. The Unknown that we have gript
And lost is our surviving mastodon.
When weariness bends back our limbs and fear,
Its jackal, turns the hunt on us, we rear
And look to God, and to His covert run.”

PHILIP EDWARD STEVENSON

SEVEN CHILDREN

To M. H. S.

DALE was working awful hard, but he stopped a sec and looked off to the Sangry de Cristo mountns. Pretty near all the snow was off em now it was June, and he was sorry. In winter they was nice, all white and blue and roly like a warm quilt, but now they made him think of an old woman Indian he'd seen in Santer Fee sitting hunched up with a patchy shawl over her head behind a lotta shiny black pots, and when Dale looked at her she'd look and look right *into* him till he felt like he'd been naughty or done somepm terrible.

She was a-looking at him now, the old woman Indian in the mountns was, and he ptended he didn't see her.

"Here Dink! He-ere Dinky!"

He tried to wistle, but he couldn't wistle good when his mouth was so dry. Dinky must be chasing rabbits or trying to dig up prairie dogs. Anyhow he wasn't around.

Nobody was.

It was kinda lonely with Toady away.

Still, it was nice having Toady away sometimes. Toady was so . . . He always . . . Course, Dale liked him though—gosh, wasn't Toady his own brother and youngern him and gooder and ever'thing? It wasn't like Margaret. Margaret was Mommy's before Mommy married Dads—she was seventeen and tried to act so grown *up*. She called Dale and Toady "the kids" and she'd call Dale "Clumsy Clopper" on account he was too tall for his age, though that wasn't funny at all—heck. But she was that way—too darn Smarty all the time. Margaret was Gaudawful. She made him sick—pugh! Dale was sure glad she wasn't his *whole* sister so he'd hafta like her. He couldn't ever. Not if you gave him Dinky all to himself. Not if Mommy would rock him ever

day and *ast* him to. Not if Dads was to promise never to lick him no more.

Wile Dale worked, his fort turned into a castle and the castle into a park like the one back in Kansas. Then he had a *real* idear—whee!

He mooched down into the coulée (mooching is a kind of little-walking, moving your feet fast as heck like Toady used to do when he was a baby, and making chooeey noises like a train), and there he got a bunch of those pretty red pebbles wich was busted off of a big rock by the frost. He carried em back up to where dust-storms had left a nice pile of clean sand—on the northeast side of the stock-shed where it was shady. The cross was made already. It wasn't a very good cross but it would hafta do. Then he made a long mound outa the sand, like the mounds he used to see back of the church in Kansas before they came out to New Mexico. He couldn't make it look like one of the real ones because New Mexico grass was so thin, but he planted little pieces of piñon over it and ptended it was grass and fixed the red pebbles around the edge and stuck the cross up at one end.

It was nice.

The sun was hot, like a stove when it's red and you sit too close. The watermelon-mountn over beyond Cerrillos was lavender and looked like you could poke your finger through it. Between there and here, in the south and west, was a bunch of other homesteads—just shacks, with brown patches around em wich was the fields, and fenced-in pasture wich was commencing to get yellor on account it hadn't rained lately and the sun was so blame hot. Why, over to the south Dale was pretty near fooled by a mirage with trees and water that looked awful real, and *that* didn't happen only when it was *some* hot. The air just jiggged up in down like it was scared, and over by the Sangry de Cristos—

But Dale wouldn't look that way again. He might see the old woman Indian, and he didn't wanta. But up that way (he didn't look!) was Santer Fee where Dads went to-day with Mr. Bryan on business. Toady was with em—just for the ride. He'd come back with Mr. Bryan but Dads was gonna stay up there a coupla days. Mr. Bryan had ast

Dale to go too but they wouldn't let him on account Mommy needed somebody to stay and help her, and Sam wich is the hired man had lots to do without helping her. So Toady got to go. Margaret was up there too, the old Smarty, because the Bryans had lotsa money and two cars and Sue Bryan had took her up to Santer Fee to buy a hat or somepm. That left just Dale home—and Mommy a-course, and Sam; but they was both busy. That's why Dale was playing by himself and oh, there wasn't nothing to do. He was sweatn too. He hoped the cloud over the watermelon-mountn meant it was gonna rain. Whew! he was about dead.

O boy! . . . Dale had another idear.

He mooched down to the coulée *again* and got a lot *more* red stones. He dumped em down on the ground and giggled wile he began sticking em around the top of the mound, and finely they spelled

TOADY SUMMERS.

Whee! that was funny! He laughed. Spose Toady really was under there!

2.

"Dale! O-o-oh Dale! . . . Dale *Summers!*"

Dale woke up. That was Mommy hollowing for him. He hoped she wouldn't lick him. But then she never did. She'd just tell Dads what Dale had done and ask *him* to do the licking.

He jumped all over Toady's grave and chucked the red stones ever wich way and ran up past the shed to the house. The house was just a wood shack now, though Dads said Mr. Bryan was gonna help him put up an adobe one next year if the bean crop was any good. Anyhow it was a million times bettern the shack made of old railroad ties that poor Granma Schnepfel and her son Mr. Schnepfel lived in. Bettern the Kirschmeyers' place, too, or the Sothebys' or Mr. Manzanares's. Bettern *any* of the homesteads—except the Bryans'. But then *they* was *rich*.

The wind was starting up and the tar-paper was going Flap-flap on the roof. There wasn't many flies bumbling

around the screen door of the kitchen, though lotsa good smells came through it. Mommy was baking, her face was all red.

"Gonna make pie, Mommy?"

"No I'm not gonna make pie," Mommy said, "and where have you been, you stayed home to help me and when I want you I hafta hollow my lungs to pieces, what were you doing?"

"Playing."

Dale let out a big sigh. Mommy was mad. . . . She could find the *most* things to get mad about——

"Playing! I guess so. That's all you ever think of, not helping your Mommy, you just go down and get me a bucket of well-water."

"Oh *Mom-my*! What do I hafta work all the time for? I never get to go on rides like Toady does or nothin. I always hafta work and Toady always gets out of it. It's Gaudawful!"

"What did you say?" screecht Mommy. "I'll teach you to say bad words like that! What did I tell you about using that word?"

"You said it wasn't spectable, Mommy, but Sam says it all the time and you never scold him for it."

"The idear! A great big boy talking like that to his Mommy."

Dale was a-scared she might cry.

"I'm sorry, Mommy, only I was sore because Toady always gets out of all the work."

"Oh is that so!" Mommy said. "I spose you've forgotten the time you went to Santer Fee at Fiesta time and poor old Granma Schnepel spent all her savings buying you popcorn and taking you to see those wild-Indian dances? And got you that big sombrero you're wearing this minute—in the house too!"

Dale took off his hat wich Dads called a straw umberella, and held it behind him—Mommy had took it away from him once for keeping it on in the house.

"I guess you have a lot more fun than I do," Mommy went on, "but when I ask you to do one thing, then it's 'Oh why do I hafta work, Mommy?' You go along or I'll find a stick!"

Dale went. He hated getting water. He wondered why Toady didn't hate it too. It was awful hard. Not so bad when the tank was full, but Dads hadn't winlassed any from the well for a coupla days before he left, so Dale had to let the bucket down on a line. He wisht he could get some outa the reservor but that was all muddy—not enough water to irrigate now because it hadn't rained good for so long.

But when it did . . . ! There was a rock dam way up the coulée, and when it rained hard and the coulée flowed, the dam turned some of the water into a cequia. The cequia looked like it climbed up the side of the coulée, but it didn't really because water couldn't climb hills. Anyhow it led the water to a reservor wich Dads and Sam had duggen. It only worked pretty good, Dads said, you could irrigate a mite of the crop with it if it didn't go too long without a rain. But wow! it was fun just the same. You could sail boats there when it was full, and you took off your pants if nobody was a-looking, and you tried to catch them funny lizards the Mexicons ptended to be so afraid of. Liberado, one of the Mexican boys in school at Cerrillos, said that one of them lizards got inside his sister one time and made her awful sick. But that was all tripe because Dads said so. Mexicons was ignorant some ways.

Wow, he almost spilled the water back in the tank. It was nice and cold. Dale drank and drank outa the dipper. There was Sam going over to the haug-pen. Sam had red hair, even redder than Dale's, and he'd been ever'where and done ever'thing and he was a good scout.

"Hello, Sam! I'm getting water for Mommy!"

"Hi, Gumboats!" Sam hollowed. Sam always called him Gumboats on account of his big feet. "What got you to workin? Did they use dynamite on yer? Say, I wonder if your Ma's got any clabber to-day."

"I dunno, Sam. I'll ask her."

The bucket slopped a little wile he mooched through Mommy's vegetables. He *had* to mooch when he carried water. Gee, some of it went and wet his shoes.

"Wisht I wasn't so clumsy," he thought.

3.

"There, Dale! The last dish! Aren't you glad it's done?"

"Yes, Mommy. It wasn't so hard."

Mommy sat and rocked, her head kinda rolling against the back of the rocker. Dale sat in another chair picking at the loose sole in his shoe, and watched her. There was thunder in the mountns. Gaud must be rolling big rocks down the canyons—that's what he used to think last year when he was little, but now he knew thunder was like the click you made when you shuffled around on the carpet in winter and then touched Toady and a spark came with a click and Toady said, "Ouch! Mommy, Dale's clickin me with leetwicity!" Just a click like that, but a hunderd million times *bigger!*

Mommy rocked and rocked. Her hands fastened and unfastened in her lap. There was lotsa room there. . . .

Gee, that was a *big* rock Gaud just rolled. Maybe the coulée would flow and the reserovor would get full. There wasn't much to do when it was empty . . . except teach Dinky how to sit up, or watch the haugs root, or talk to Sam . . . or try to get the chickons to fighting . . . or else coast down the road past the shed in the Scoot-Express wagon, down through the gate in the bob-wire fence and into the bottom of the coulée below the reserovor! You went like sixty. But it was dangerous. Once Dale had started down when the gate was shut, and he'd had to turn off and the Scoot had bumped into the bob-wire, but Dale had rolled out just in time. So Mommy and Dads wouldn't let him any more, they said: "If he hadn't a-been so clumsy and fell out, he'd a-got killed." But once he did it anyhow and nobody never saw him (except the old woman Indian in the Sangry de Cristos—woo!) and golly! there wasn't nothing so much fun or so exciting! You just zipped! About niney—no, sixty miles an hour!

Mommy was looking at him sorta queer. Maybe she was gonna give him a penny for his thoughts, so he looked outa the window. It was raining already over the mountns. The clouds was awful black, and pieces of em like long rags was

a-hanging over the hills. The big rocks was rolling pretty steady now.

"Come on, Dale."

He jumped pretty near.

"Where, Mommy?"

"I saw you looking at my lap awile ago, didn't I?"

Whee! Mommy was gonna rock him! She didn't hardly ever do it. She rocked Toady all the time. When Dale ast her she'd say: "You wiggle too much, Dale, I can't stand it. Besides, you're too old." But now she *ast* him to! So he rushed. He snuggled. Mommy didn't seem mad at all now.

"What did you do this morning, Dale?"

"Helped you, Mommy."

"No, but before."

"Oh. I played." He didn't want her to ask him about the mound. "Had a buncha fun too, Mommy. I hope it rains good and hard this afternoon so the reservor'll be all full. Gee, I'm glad we came to New México, Mommy! So is Toady. And Dads." Mommy looked like she was gonna ask more questions, so he hurried. "But you don't like it, do you, Mommy? . . . Why don't you?"

"Oh . . . I do, Dale. You wouldn't understand."

"Yes I would, Mommy. Tell me."

"Well, Dale, back there in Kansas, you see, we lived in town and I could get help and . . ."

"And what, Mommy?"

Mommy's eyes was shining now.

"And I could see people. I had my friends. You'll understand some day what that means, Dale. The minister was so nice. . . . There used to be church socials where we could talk . . . and sorta help each other out about things."

Dale wondered what the minister helped Mommy with.

"What things, Mommy?" he said.

"Oh . . . ever'budy has things to bother em, Dale."

"Yeah. Housekeeping, I guess." Dale felt all grown up talking like that with Mommy. "I guess housekeeping is hard. I thought of that, Mommy, wile I was helping."

Mommy smiled.

"Yes, . . . and other things Dale. I can't help it, I kinda punish for the old life sometimes. You'll understand some day . . . when you're big."

He felt all little again.

"Then why did Dads wanta come out here?"

"Oh, he read a book a long time ago . . . by some foreigner it was . . . about the Soil and how things grew and all . . . and that set him off." Mommy was looking way off now, like she was talking to the mountns or somepm. She didn't notice the thunder a tall. "Todd Summers is a fine man," she said, sorta dreamy, "but he's gotta have his own way about things. And he has funny ideas—not like most people. He was raised on a farm in New England and loves farming. Then there was the book. . . . He coulda made all he wanted in real estate in Kansas, with the town booming and all, but he didn't feel right about it. Kep a-saying he was living off the farmers, that they made the land a fine place to live in and all he was doing was getting the profits of their work on the land. He kep a-wishing he could have a piece of land to tame too—that's the word he'd use. He'd talk about land like it was an animal that ran wild if you didn't tame it. He felt bad about ever deal he'd put over. Then he got a letter from Mr. Bryan here—that was three years ago—and he got more and more restless. And so finely we packed up and came and filed on this . . . this . . . And then, too, he loves owning so much land. He loves to stand here and look out over the fields and pasture and all the 640 acres of it and say: 'Look! that's ours. We own all that!' . . ."

Dale felt funny and didn't say nothing. Mommy looked like she wanted to cry awful bad, and so Dale wanted to cry too. The thunder was a-getting louder all the time.

"I *hate* it!" Mommy said, but you could hardly hear her because there was a big bang just then. "I hate to think of you boys in school with all those Mexicons and Eyetalians—they aren't spectable people and they're so ignorant and dirty and all."

"Some of em's bright some ways, Mommy. You oughta see Liberado draw—he can draw *anything* and the teacher

says he oughta take lessons." Mommy didn't know much about Mexicons—she'd always get sore when you said they was nice and could do things. So Dale said: "But I guess you're right, Mommy. I won't play with Liberado next year if you don't want me to."

But it didn't seem like Mommy heard him.

"I did want you boys to grow up to be little gentlemen, not farmers! And it's hard for Margaret too. Back there she was always being ast out, she had so *many* parties and *nice* friends, I used to love to see her and Rosie and Nell go up the street together all in pretty dresses and laughing and having such a *nice* time. And here she has to go fifteen miles to High School and hasn't hardly any friends except Sue . . . and that Stuffy Means and him a Catholic, though he's a nice boy, I guess——"

"Oh *Mom-my!*"

Dale held in as long as she was talking about Margaret and her pretty dresses (gee!) but when she called Stuffy a *nice* boy . . . pee-yugh!

Mommy kinda woke up at that and looked outdoors. It was starting to rain. Sounded like somebody was dropping pebbles on the roof. Great big drops for a wile.

"Dale, get my tea-towels off the line, will you?"

He climbed off and dug his knee into Mommy so she said "Ooh!" and went out and got the towels. Dinky was out there wagging his stump (wich was what Dads called his tail) and wanting-in, so Dale opened the door for him and . . . dropped one of the towels in the mud.

Mommy didn't see.

The rain was like somebody playing the hose on the house now. It would go "Sh-sh-sh" and stop; "Sh-sh-sh" and stop again; over and over. Then there was a green-and-yeller flash, so Dale couldn't see nothing, and a "Crrr-racketty-BANG-bumble-roarrrr," and then the rain came *some*.

It made an awful racket. You could just imagine how the hollow places in the coulée was a-filling up muddy, and it must be running in the prairie-dog holes and soaking the red-ant hills and probly drowning a lotta rats and rattle-snakes and beetles, or could they swim? R-r-r-r-r-r, the

rain drummed down on the tar-paper and the same old leak started over in the corner by the stove, so Dale put a pan under. It sounded good hitting the tin like that. He was excited!

"Look out, Dinky! Bad dog! Go lie down! Bad."

Mommy was a-scolding Dink and Dale couldn't hardly hear her. She was in the dining-room wick was the sitting-room too, looking outa the window towards the road. Way off in the pasture—well, not way off either because you couldn't see that far, but pretty far—was Pansy the cow and the work-horses Cicero and Cincinnatus a-standing with their heads down butting the storm with their behinds wile the rain just streaked over em.

Dink was lying down under the sofa feeling bad, he'd shook himself all over Mommy when he came in and Mommy had scolded him, so Dale crawled under there too. It was cosy. Dinky licked his face and felt better. Gosh! suddenly the rain was coming down twice as hard as before! Dale thought he'd better get up.

"It's a cloudburst, Mommy!" He had to yell.

The thunder rolled around like it was just over their heads, there was rivers running past the stock-shed to the coulée, and the roof of the shed had silver screens hanging from it.

"The poor haugs, Mommy! Won't they get wet! Are the chickens in?"

"Sam must be tending to things."

You couldn't hardly see the road now, and the gutters was going "Flack-flacketty-flick-flock" from the roof, and the thunder rowled worsen ever, and it was most dark except for those green flashes that made the shivers go up in down your spine.

"Poor Toady!" Mommy said real loud. "Where do you spose he is?"

"Oh he's all right!" Wow, there was Sam a-running in from the field where he'd been cutting weeds with the go-devil—just *drowned*! He'd turned Cicero and Cincinnatus loose in the pasture where Dale had seen em, and he'd left the go-devil and was carrying the harness in—just *beating*

it! Dale saw him duck in the shed—or was it in behind where the chickens were? “Toady’ll be all right, Mommy. But poor Sam, he’s about drowned, Mommy. Poor Sam!”

That made Mommy mad. “A lot you care what happens to your little brother. Selfish boy!”

(Wow. . . .)

Dale waited a minute, kinda scary because the noise got louder all the time, and then said: “Spose they’ll be able to get through the arroyo by Mr. Manzanara’s place, Mommy? Spose it was flowing—spose it was just rushing like the ocean, a reglar flood—and spose the car got stuck in the middle.” Mommy just sat there. “They might get tipped over. That’d be fierce. They might drown. I sure hope not.”

All of a sudden Mommy hollowed, awful sore: “Get out! Go on, get out! If you can’t think of anything better to say, go in the kitchen!”

“Oh Mommy! I thought you *wanted* me to say that! Honest, Mommy! Please don’t make me go out!”

It was pretty near like night now, and like animals was a-roaring at you to eat you up.

“Go on! You’re an awful kid! An awful kid! Another word and I’ll use the stick on you! The idear!”

“Oh Mommy!” Dale was crying now. You never *could* tell with Mommy. “I know I’m awful but I can’t help it, Mommy. I said what I thought you wanted me to say and then—oh *gee*! Ever’thing was so *nice*, Mommy, and now you had to go and *roon* ever’thing! I know I’m an awful kid, but I can’t *help* it!”

Just then there was a fierce ball of lightning dropped outside the window and the most Gaudawful Bang you ever heard. Mommy went “Woo!” and Dale saw the furniture jump up in down and felt the hairs stand up on their hind legs and Dinky scooted out from under the sofa and streaked it for the closet in Mommy’s room with his stump between his legs as far as it would go.

They was so scared they didn’t dasst to say a word. Dale was white as a sheet. They kinda waited for the house to fall in on em.

Then Sam came in making puddly tracks all over the room and red and laughy, and said that nothing on the place hadn't been struck so fur as he could see, and that the little chickens was all bedded down all right, and ever'thing was tended to.

"Holy cripes!" he'd keep saying. "I'd hate to have New Mexico weather fer a wife, now!"

Mommy forgot all about sending Dale out or being mad. She was fine again, and Dale wisht the others wouldn't never come home.

4.

Dale kep a-looking back to the house. The reservor was all full and there was some breeze, but it wasn't much fun all alone. He thought his boat never *would* get blowed across.

As soon as it did, though, he started up to the house. It had stopped raining a long wile ago and now the sun was a-coming out. It was about a *year* since he'd seen the car coming way off across the pasture near the Sothebys' place, and quite a time since he'd heard Mr. Bryan's voice and the car going "Frrrrup, frrrrup" in fronta the house; but Toady hadn't come over *yet*. Dale woulda thought he'd come right to the reservor first thing.

Mommy was cooking.

"Where's Toady, Mommy?"

"In bed and get your muddy feet off my floor."

He went and scraped em. "In bed! What for?"

"Because I put him there."

Gee, she was sore at him again—soon as Toady come home.

"I'm gonna see him."

"You leave Toady alone! He came home soaked and had an awful headache and don't you dare bother him. You stay outa there."

"Well, can I go in and get somepm?"

"What you wanta get?"

"Why . . . Mommy, I—when I was sailing my boat, Mommy, why . . . the sail came off and I . . . I've got some old school paper in my room and——"

"Well, hurry."

Dale did, he beat it. But just as he was, Mommy moved and he banged into her.

"Clumsy!"

"Gosh, I'm sorry, Mommy." Funny, he didn't mind it so much when Mommy called him that; but when Margaret did, with that awful Smarty way she'd say it, he just couldn't *stand* it, that's all, he couldn't *stand* it.

He didn't have time to ask Toady hardly anything about the trip because Toady was crabby or somepm, way down under the covers, and besides Mommy hollowed at him. He mooched back with the paper.

"Look at this tea-towel!" she yelled. "Did you do that?"

"No, Mommy, honest! I didn't do it. Maybe Dink got a-hold of it."

"Dale Summers, you're lying! The dog couldn't a-got it hanging way up here."

"Well, Sam could. Maybe he wiped his hands on it. I'm *not* lying, Mommy!" He looked her right in the eye, so Mommy said, "Well, you better not be," and Dale beat it outdoors and thought, "Well, I *didn't* do it, the mud did."

"Dale!"

He was scared. Maybe she wouldn't bother to call again.

"Da-a-ayle!"

"Coming!" (Gosh.) "What, Mommy?"

"Toady wants a drink and I'm busy. Take it to him."

(Whew!) "Yes, Mommy." Wasn't he glad, though!

He opened the door of the room and both him and Toady spoke at the same time.

Toady whispered: "Got a surpwise for you, Dale."

Dale said: "Was the water deep in the arroyo when——"

But just then he saw one of the Humpty-Dumpty clowns on the floor and he didn't wanta step on it, so he kinda lunged over it and kicked the leg of the bed instead. That made him fall and he wallopt his forehead on the footboard and let go the glass and whee! it went all *over* Toady and *soaked* him! Dale didn't cry—he thought it was like the Funnies—but Toady bawled and hollowed.

Mommy came out and cracked Dale a good one and picked

up Toady and took him in the sitting-room and rocked him till he was quiet.

Dale went in and said: "I'm sorry, Mommy, I didn't wanta step on the Humpty-Dumpty clown and so I——"

"Oh *you!*" Mommy said. "You're hopeless."

Dale didn't say any more but just watched Toady getting rocked and oh gee! he felt awful. But when Toady said, "Mommy, don't be mad at Dale, he diddun't twy to"—then Dale wanted to go and cry somewhere, hard, because Toady was goodern him.

5.

Course Toady wasn't always good. Dale wouldn't like Toady if he was a goodygood all the time. He acted pretty bad sometimes and was a fraidy-cat about badgers or rattlesnakes, and he'd tattle and ever'thing. Like the other day. Once Dale let all the haugs outa their pen and Dads licked him good for it, but it was fun all the same—not the licking but watching the haugs run around with Dinky yapping at em. Well, another time Dale said he'd *like* to let em out again and Toady went and told Mommy that Dale was *gonna* let em out and he almost got another licking. He hadn't said he was gonna, just that he'd *like* to.

Dale didn't know why but after awhile, watching Toady get petted, he got kinda sore and didn't wanta cry any more. He just sat there and watched and got madder and madder and kinda wondered why he was so mad. Finely he couldn't stand it and he said:

"Now rock me, Mommy."

Mommy said: "Nonsense, Dale, you're too big."

"No, I'm not, Mommy, I'm only two years oldern Toady." He was getting madder all the time and he didn't wanta let on, but finely he couldn't help saying: "You always rock Toady and you never rock me!"

"Now don't get jealous of your little brother, Dale," Mommy said, "You know I rock you plenty of times, only you're so big, you wiggle too much and hurt me. Why I rocked you after lunch and I'm still sore where you dug me."

"No I don't, Mommy, I promise I won't. Please rock me now," Dale said, pretty near crying, he was so mad.

Mommy said: "You know you just don't want me to rock Toady any more. You're jealous. You're just real ornery today, and you better behave yourself."

And she picked up Toady and put him in her bed because his bed was all soaked. Then she hanged up the wet blankets on the line—the sun was out again—and went back to the kitchen. Dale follered her and said:

"Mommy, you gotta rock me. You rocked Toady."

She kinda frowned and said: "I would, Dale, but not when you're just jealous. It's not nice or spectable. Toady got hurt, that's why I rocked him."

"Well, I'm hurt too, Mommy!" Dale hollowed. "I wallopt my forehead on the footboard and it hurt somepm *fierce*, really, Mommy!"

"Oh, you go on," said Mommy, "you're not hurt."

"Well, I was gonna *help* you!" Dale screecht. "Now I'm not a-gonna!" And he went out back feeling awful because he knew she didn't believe he was gonna help her really.

Out there was a little wagon he was a-making for Dink to pull around with some of the Humpty-Dumpty clowns and animals inside. It was most finished. All he had to do was nail on the driver's seat and fasten the axul-with-the-weels-on to the bottom. Dale felt pretty mad and excited but he got the driver's seat on all right—well, not all right either, because he couldn't seem to hammer the nails very straight for thinking about Toady and Mommy and ever'thing—but he got it on. Then he was just gonna put the axul on when wow! he gave his thumb an awful wallop with the hammer. He didn't know why he cried so hard, because he couldn't feel hardly anything in his thumb, only he knew it hurt when you wallopt your finger with a hammer; anyhow he yelled Bloody Murder and ran to Mommy.

"Why Dale pet, what did you do?" she said.

He was still bawling awful, but he showed her his thumb.

"Why, I don't see anything," she said and Dale yelled all the harder because she wasn't mad any more and called him pet. "Did you hit it?"

He touched the joint to show her where and she leaned down and kissed and he quit boo-hooing all of a sudden.

"Oh," she said, "I guess that isn't very bad. I'm surprised my big Dale would cry so hard over so little."

"It's *not* little, Mommy, it hurts somepm fierce!" And justabout then it did begin hurting when the feeling came back into it. "Mommy, it *does* hurt! It *does* hurt, Mommy!"

Mommy didn't do anything. She looked at him kinda funny and maybe kinda laughy inside.

It really hurt now, so he said: "Mommy, it's hurting worse all the *time*! Mommy, please rock me!"

Then she did laugh all right.

"Dale, did you go to all that trouble just to get your own way?"

"No, I *didn't*, Mommy! But you *said* you'd rock me if I got hurt! You *said* so, Mommy!"

Mommy still laughed. "You didn't *get* hurt, Dale. You hurt yourself—on purpose probly!"

And he knew she was just making fun of him and that made him sorn ever, and he hollowed out:

"Well, you're a liar then! You said you would and you're not doing it! I bet if I was Toady you would! You lick me when I lie and then you go and be one yourself!"

"All right for you, Dale Summers," Mommy said, kinda white and tinny-sounding. "I'll remember what you said. And so will Dads when he gets home!"

But Dale was sorry and scared at what he'd said. He told her he was sorry and didn't mean it, but she just went back to the kitchen and said:

"No, you're not sorry. You're just afraid of what your father will do to you, you're just as *mad*. I can see it in your face. You go on and cool off, and when you're just real sorry you come and tell me. Go on, now."

"I'm sorry *now*, Mommy, really I am!"

He was, too. But there wasn't no use, so he said, "Oh, ding bust it!" and went down to the haug-pen. The haugs was just lying around. They wasn't dirty hardly a tall like people said. Dads would say when Dale ate sloppy at table, "The haugs wouldn't have you eat with em."

Dale got sick of looking at em doing nothing. There was a black beetle coming for him. He kicked at it with his sneaker and the beetle stood on its head.

Cincinnatus was ambling up from the pasture thinking he was gonna get fed, but probly he wasn't because he'd only worked in the morning and the grass was plenty so far this year.

Dale started for the shed. Sam was in there milking Pansy.

"Hello, Gumboats, lookin for some chuck?"

Sam had been lotsa things and a cowboy too, and "chuck" was cowboy talk for somepm to eat. Sam was a funny one but Dale got along with him swell. They talked a long wile and Dale ast him again about how he'd busted his nose. He knew the story because Sam had told him lotsa times how he used to be a high-diver wich dived at County Fairs into a tank only six foot deep for money. One time when Sam was just gonna dive but didn't know how very good yet, a feller in the granstand hollowed out: "Think it over, Red!" (Sam had red hair, redder than Dale's even.)

"Well, Gumboats, I did think, then. I thought a lot too much. And there I was a-wizzin down through the ozone and nothin betwixt me and Davy Jones but six feet o' water. I never was no good at figgers, though, and could a-did it better with guessin; so I landed kinder on the bias and kissed the bottom o' the tank with my ole smeller. Well, all the stars and planets came a-hoverin round to help; but it didn't do much good, I guess, because they had to dive for me. They saved *me* all right, only they couldn't save my beak. Say, Gumboats, it was all over my physiology except where it should ought to been."

Wow! Dale was just rolling all around the floor of the shed. Sam was so *funny*! He didn't never tell it the same way twice. But that was why Sam's nose was so crooked now.

They went up to the house with the milk and there was Dinky's cart! Dale had forgot all about it. And when he went to work to finish it he remembered his thumb too. It wasn't so awful stiff, though. He'd just got the cart all

done and called Dinky and hitched him up, when Toady came out. Dale didn't pay no attention. Dinky was funny. He didn't wanta pull the cart but would just sit down and wag his stump, and his face looked just like Granma Schnep-pel when she was nice and gave you a cookie.

Toady laughed too, but Dale didn't even notice him there. He knew why Toady was up. He'd smelled Mommy making pie, and he didn't wanta be sick for supper. (Gosh.)

Finely Toady said: "Dale, let's get the Humpty-Dumpty dolls and put the clowns and the balett dancer in the cart and have Dinky pull em all awound? . . . And the elphunt could push behind!"

Dale just didn't notice.

"Come on, Dale." And Toady said it all over again.

"Oh Toady!" Dale said, pretty disgusted, "all you ever use the Humpty-Dumpty set for is *dolls*!"

"Well then, let's put Fuzzie in the cart."

Fuzzie was the red camel wich it used to be Dale's but on his last birthday he give it to Toady. Now he wisht he hadn't a-give it to him because Toady treated animals somepm fierce and Fuzzie's stuffing was beginning to come out.

"No, Toady! This is *my* cart and *I'm* gonna run it!" Dale said. He was wishing Toady woulda stayed in bed. But one thing he was glad, though. Toady hadn't done a single stroke of work on the wagon, so Dale could say it was all his and wouldn't hafta divide it with Toady like ever'thing else.

"Well, Dale . . . ?"

"What?"

"Take me coasting down the hill in the Scoot-Expwess wagon, willya?"

"Gosh sakes, Toady!"

"Aw come on, Dale, willya?"

"Gosh *sakes*, Toady!" Dale said. "You might get *hurt*! . . . Mommy! *Mommy*! Toady's gonna coast through the bob-wire gate!"

"I'm *not*, Mommy!" Toady hollowed, pretty scared. But then Margaret had to go and spoil ever'thing—as usual!

Dale didn't know she was home yet, but she came out and said:

"You kids shut up and give Mother a chance. Nobody's gonna do anything except go wash for supper. You first, Clumsy Clop."

Dale stuck out his tongue at her. *Pee-yugh!* she was so *Smarty*. She sure was *Gaudawful*. You kids!—like him and Toady was only her slaves or somepm. *Gosh!*

6.

They were washing down behind the tank.

"Here, Dale," Toady wispered, though he didn't hafta. But Toady was like that, an awful scare-cat. "I was gonna give you this when you soaked me with the water. Mr. Bwyan got it for me in Santer Fee."

He squatted down and slipped Dale a wad of candy all stuck up with lint.

"*Whee*, Toady! Jimunny *Crissmus*, that's nice of you! Wow, Toady, *thanks—ever* so much! I don't wanta take *all* your candy, though."

He kinda held it out so Toady could take some of it back if he'd reach far enough.

"*That's* all wight," Toady said. "I had a lot of it, Dale."

And Toady got kinda red. Dale knew he musta just *stuffed*. Maybe he was keeping some. Hiding it or somepm.

"*Bo-o-ees!* Toady! Dale! Supper! Where *are* you!"

Gee, they both jumped, though!

"Tell her we're washing and we're coming, Toady!"

"*Com-ming!* We're washing," Toady said but not very loud because they weren't. But the dipper had a little water in so he poured it over his hands and wiped em on his pants and ran. Dale had a fierce time getting all that wad down—it was so *sticky*. He choked and coughed a coupla times and swallowed some of it whole; but it was down! He ran too.

"Let's see your hands, Kid," Margaret said.

"I won't!"

"You see if you don't!" Margaret grabbed him by the

collar. "Lord! You haven't touched water to em to-day—filthy kid. What were you doing out there? Toady got clean. What were you doing?"

"Nunna-your-biz!"

She cracked him. "Is that so! It's my business to have you look spectable at table, I tell you! You go back and *wash*. Just because we've moved out to this forsaken neck of the woods and live on a farm is no reason . . ."

Dale ran so he wouldn't hafta hear the end. Farm! It was a *ranch*. He mooched all the way up from the tank so's to take time. Then if Mommy scolded him for being late he could blame it on Margaret. But Mommy didn't say nothing.

Supper was terrable. Sam didn't feel funny at all and just ate to beat the band, and Margaret was Gaudawful. She kep after Dale all the time about the way he ate, said he spoiled her aptite. He hoped he did but no such luck because she ate like a horse and pigged down two pieces of pie. Of course Dale had to hiccup wile he was eating his first piece—on account the candy, probly—heck!—and so Mommy heard him and took the pie away when he'd only finished half, and Toady begged for the other half and got it too, a-course!

Margaret kep after him and *after* him, and he was pretty sore about the pie and all, so finely he said, trying to sound Smarty like her:

"Well, I spose you're gonna hug and kiss and make love with your bo Stuffy Means to-night? That's a good name," he said, even if Mommy and Margaret was both hollowing at him, "that's a good name because he's Mean all right and the other day somebody I know called him a Stuffed Shirt." (It was true, too; Dads said it to Mommy and Mommy laughed.)

Gosh, Margaret gave him *some* wallop and she was red as a beat, and Dale had to go in his room for half an hour. He didn't cry when he went but just said:

"I dibs the Humpty-Dump when I come back."

He wasn't out there moren a minute when he heard Mommy and Margaret in the next room wich was Mar-

garet's. Mommy was saying, "He sure *is* an awful kid, I don't know *what* to do with him!" They wispered and Dale lay on the floor pretty close to their door to listen. Next thing, they were talking about what Margaret was gonna wear to-night. (She *was* going out with Stuffy!) They talked and *talked* about the dress and a-course she decided on the pink one—she *always* made an awful fuss about her dress and *always* decided on the pink one. But she and Mommy always had to groan about living on a farm and not having lotsa clothes and—— They was talking about Stuffy now. Mommy was telling Margaret to come home real early and not to take any drinks of licker or dance with any of those Spanish People or let Stuffy get fresh—wich she probly meant about hugging and kissing. Mommy was always telling her about that.

Then Margaret said: "Gaud, Mother, but you're an old victoria"—somepm *like* that anyhow. Dale crawled closer to the crack under the door.

Mommy was kinda peeved because she hated you to say "Gaud."

"Better wear a girdle, daughter," Mommy went on; but Margaret didn't because when Dale saw her later she didn't have no belt on and he knew that meant a belt. Margaret was Gaudawful, she didn't do hardly anything Mommy told her.

They had a long argument too about Mommy wanted her to put somepm over or bust—somepm like that. "You get so wet," Mommy said, "and boys is so horrid nowadays." Dale figgered she meant to put on rubbers over her shoes because boys wouldn't put any cloaks in puddles for you to walk on nowadays. When Dale had about Sir Walter in the Fourth Reader, she'd told him that men wasn't like that nowadays and didn't care for shivery.

Finely Dale got sick of all that tripe and lay on the bed and planned how he was gonna play with the Humpty-Dumpty set when he could come out. Toady always used em for dolls—heck. The clown was always the Hewo and the elphunt (Toady talked like that because he was so little) was the Funny Fat Man and the donkey was the Villun and

the balett dancer was the Girl. He would make up plays sorta like the movies and sorta like the funny papers and he'd talk for all of em—Toady was real good at making up plays, but gee! that wasn't no fun. Dale was gonna play Circus and make em do Balancing Tricks with the ladders and chairs and build pyramids that just stood on one ladder without touching anything.

"Can I come out, Mommy?"

Ding bust it! There was Toady with the Humpty-Dump. He was having a play and he ast Dale to do it with him, but Dale said:

"No, Toady, I dibbed the set and I wanta play Circus. Mommy, didn't I dibs the set?"

"Can't you both play with it?" Mommy said. "Share and share alike, you know, Dale."

They tried that but it wasn't no use. Dale got kinda mad the way Toady played, so they finely had to divvy up the set.

Dale took the ladders and a chair and the clown and dancer and tried to do some Balancing Tricks. The idear was to put the chairs and the clown and dancer on a ladder and make the ladder stand up without touching anything else.

"Betcha can't do it," Margaret said. She was trying her curling iron on a piece of paper and making an awful smelly smoke.

"Betcha *can*, Smarty," Dale said, but he was kinda excited and it took him quite a wile. He had the chair hooked into the ladder with the clown sitting in it near the top and the balett dancer hanging on below with one hand and foot wile the other hand and foot stuck out sideways. He worked and worked and got sweaty because he was excited. Finely he had the ladder justabout balanced when Toady had to go and spoil it. Toady had the elphunt—wich was the Fat Man in his play—fall hard on his siddown, and that shook the floor and Dale's ladder fell and the clown went one way and the dancer another. Gosh! wasn't he mad? He told Toady to quit that, but a little wile later he had em all balanced and hollowed to Mommy and Smarty Margaret to

look, when *Bang* went the Fat Man again! Dale specially wanted Margaret to see because the old Smarty always said you couldn't balance a ladder without touching anything; but wile Margaret turned to look the ladder fell and she laughed. Wow! he musta hit Toady pretty hard. Toady yelled Bloody Murder and Margaret chased Dale with the firepoker.

7.

Just then Stuffy came in, and Margaret put on some powder quick so he wouldn't see how mad she was, and she cooed at him somepm fierce. Stuffy was pretty near fat and Dads said he put bear's grease on his hair—Dads didn't like him because Stuffy would say that anybody that lived on a farm was a hick. He lived in Santer Fee and worked in some store and was somepm terrable—and finely Margaret went out with him. Yea-ea!

Then it was bed-time. Dale told Mommy and Toady he was sorry, but he pretty near got sore again when Mommy said Toady was gonna sleep with her, but she went on about that Dale could the next night if Dads wasn't home, if Dale would promise not to kick and squirm too much.

"Whee! I *promise*, Mommy!" Dale said, "but Mommy, could I stay up to-night and help you with the dishes?"

That made her look happy, and she said "No, Dale pet, you don't need to, but if you'll get undressed quick I'll tell you a story."

Jimunny Wiskers, didn't he fly around, though!! In about five minutes—no, five seconds—he was up in Mommy's lap and hugging her and all kinda snuggled up against her, it was great!!

Then she told him the story. It was about—once upon a time she knew a little boy wich use to get mad all the time and bimeby little spots commenced to grow all over his face and he stayed that way and looked awful. Well, when Mommy told you a story like that she always meant you. So Dale said:

"Are there any spots now, Mommy?" He wisht Mommy would be nice, though, and not tell him stories like that.

"No, Dale, not yet, but maybe there will be if you don't get to be a better boy. God'll punish you *some way sure* if you don't get to be better and keep your temper," she said.

"Oh Mommy, I'm gonna be better!" he hollowed pretty near. "I promise! But now won't you be nice, Mommy, and not tell me any more stories like that?" And he squirmed around and hugged her and kissed her hard. He felt kinda little all of a sudden, he wisht he was really. He wanted to talk baby talk like Toady.

"Ouch, Dale! Your knee nearly killed me! I *can't* hold you if you do that."

She sounded like she was trying not to be sore at him, so he was awful careful for a minute, but then he went and forgot and all of a sudden he wanted to kiss her again and kinda lunged and wallopt her mouth with his chin so it bled and he had to go to bed finely.

Oh, gee.

It was pretty lonely out there without Toady to invent Muggsy Stories with. Dale tried it for a wile, but he couldn't make nothing good happen—just the same old thing of Muggsy blowing up his half-sister with giant firecrackers and putting glue in her bo's new hat. Toady was the one for making Muggsy Stories all right—— Oh gee, he hadn't prayed to Gaud yet. He wondered about the story Mommy told him. Sometimes stories like that was true, though generally they was just to make you be better. He better pray to Gaud anyhow.

Dale folded his hands and rolled up his eyeballs like the minister in Kansas when he ast for a specially good offering.

"Oh Gaud, Holy Father of All Mankind, . . . er . . . please help me not to get mad to-morrow so I can sleep with Mommy if Dads doesn't get home and maybe he won't because he said he had a lot to do, and I do wanta be better, Gaud, honest . . . through Jesus Christ Our Lord Amen. Oh I forgot: please, Gaud, don't make spots come on my face, I'm really gonna try, I wonder if Mommy was just making up or if she really knew a little boy wich got spots on his face maybe it would only look like freckles though and people wouldn't notice there isn't any on my face yet anyhow Oh heck she was only kidding me . . ."

8.

"All right, Mommy."

It was so dark, though, he didn't think it was daylight yet, maybe he'd made a mistake and Mommy hadn't called him. So-o-o sleepy . . .

Pretty soon he got his hair pulled. Mommy waited around for him to get up, and he could see she was crabby as heck about somepm. It was kinda cloudy and damp on account the sun had sucked up a lot of yesterday's rain, it was good for the crop but it didn't make your clothes feel good.

Dale found Mommy in the kitchen and she was nicer then, told him he'd hafta be Dads for her this morning and get the kindling and stuff.

So Dale said, "All right, Mommy," though he didn't feel extra good, and he worked a long time. Then his joint started to hurt where he'd banged it, and he said:

"Where's Toady, Mommy? Doesn't he hafta work too?"

"Poor kiddy," she said, "he's so tired from yesterday I let him rest this morning."

It made Dale pretty sore to think Toady was getting outa work just because Mr. Bryan had took him to Santer Fee, but he wouldn't let on he was sore. All he said was: "Well, he has to work if I do." He sounded kinda whiny, he didn't feel good a tall.

Mommy said: "Why, I'd think you would be proud of doing for your Dads. Aren't you proud?"

"No I'm not," Dale said, because he knew Mommy just said that to make him feel good so he'd work hard. "I'm *not* proud and I'm gonna go and wake up Toady and make him do somepm."

But Mommy came after him and caught him by the arm—not awful tight, but he cried because he didn't think it was fair to let Toady not work wile he was.

He sorta calmed down a little when Mommy said:

"Oh Dale, can't you see how I need you this morning? Please be good!"

He looked at Mommy and didn't say nothing but just looked and kinda watched her. She was getting exciteder

all the time. While she cooked she kept a-running to the window in the sitting-room which was the dining-room too, and looking up in down the road and making the worst wrinkles in her apron with her fingers. Finally she called Dale, her face all twitchy and she whispered:

"Dale . . ."

Then she looked around to see if Sam was up with the milk.

"Dale, would you be a good boy and set the table for Mommy?"

"Oh Mom-my!" Dale hollowed out, feeling like crying again, "don't make me do that too! That's Margaret's job, and Toady hasn't done one ding-busted——"

Mommy shushed him as loud as she could, then put her hand over his mouth and said more mysterious en ever:

"Don't say anything about Toady, poor totty, he was sick in the night and had bad dreams and oh dear! Listen Dale: promise me you won't mention it—oh! oh!" Mommy kinda sing-songed like she was gonna cry pretty near.

"What, Mommy? I promise," Dale said while the shivers came like they always did when things was mysterious.

"Margaret——" Mommy swallowed a coupla times. "Margaret hasn't come home yet and I'm so worried!"

Whew!

Whaddaya know about *that*!

Dale was *some* surprised. . . .

So he promised not to tell and set the table as good as he could and then went out and met Sam coming in with the milk. Gosh, it was fun having secrets with Mommy! He went down in the coulée and found Pansy the cow which Sam had just turned out to pasture and told her about it. Cicero and Cincinnatus wasn't in sight even when Dale went up the hill on the other side. But from there he could see the road clear over to the Sothebys. There wasn't no car anywheres that he could see, and he made a long nose over to where Margaret was and hoped she wouldn't never come home and nobody else wouldn't never know so he could keep on having secrets with Mommy.

When he went back up to the house he got close to Mommy in the kitchen and whispered:

"They don't any of em know, do they, Mommy?"

"Know about what?" says Mommy awful busy making flapjacks and the kitchen fulla smoke. Dale made all kindsa signs to her but she didn't see. "About what, Dale?" she asked again, so he wispered:

"About Margaret." And he couldn't help giggling.

But wow! that made Mommy mad.

"I believe you're *glad*!" she hollowed. "What an *awful* kid you are! You need a good lickin, that's what you need!"

And Sam, he was there waiting for his chuck (wich is cowboy for food), Sam had to go and say:

"Put your foot in your mouth again, didn'tcher, Gumboats?"

Dale felt pretty bad so he went in the sitting-room and got the World's Almanac wich was a fat book wich knows ever'thing, more than Dads or *anybody*, and began looking at it, but in about five seconds, no about ten minutes, Mommy called him to breakfast.

Well, about ever'thing went wrong. Dale had put the wrong kinda plates on, that was because Mommy didn't leave the table all set like on most farms with just a cloth over the dishes, she said it wasn't spectable or santary so she cleared off ever time. Sam got the right plates and didn't swear so anyone could hear him, but then Toady came out all sleepy and came to table in his nighty and so Dale said:

"You get outa here and get dressed!" he said, "D'you think I did all this work just to have you come to breakfast like that? You get outa here! You're an awful kid!"

And Dale gave him a big shove. Gosh! after he'd done all the work and Toady had slep all the time, lazy bum!

But Mommy flew outa the kitchen and lost her temper and called him a lotta names.

"You stop butting in, you!" she yelled. "I *told* Toady to eat like that, you're just a buttinski trying to run the whole house!"

She was excited somepm fierce and Dale was too just-about.

Then there wasn't any pepper on for the eggs and pretty soon Sam said: "I ain't any spun for my carfy," (that's the

way Sam talked when he wanted to be *awful* funny) "and say, what's matter here this mornin anyhow?"

"Oh, it's Dale, Sam," Mommy said, "he acts so *rude* and can't do a thing right. He's got me so I don't know if I'm coming or going," she said.

Well Jimunny Crissmuss, Dale was *mad* then! After all he'd done!

"Well," he hollowed, "it isn't *my* job, it's Margaret's, and *Gaud!* it ain't *my* fault she never came home!'" He wanted to hurt Mommy by saying Gaud and ain't.

But "Never came home?" said Sam, and made a face and raised up his eyebrows, and nobody said another word and Dale knew what he'd done. Gosh sakes, he'd never felt so *fierce*, he knew he musta been awful red because he was so hot. Sweatn. Mommy stayed in the kitchen. Toady supped up his oatmeal awful loud. But Sam was the worst. He was back in his chair, his feet was clear over to Dale's side, he was picking the flapjacks outa his teeth with a toothpick and sucking "Ts, ts!" through the cracks, and ever once and a wile he would look at Dale like he *wanted* to smile but not. Then Dale would get redder and hotter and oh! he wisht he was dead!!!

Pretty soon Sam went out and Dale went in the kitchen where Toady was up in Mommy's lap already. Gee, maybe Mommy didn't know! Lucky he wasn't red any more, he acted like he didn't do anything, he wistled and walked around awful careless and said:

"I wonder if Dads'll be home this morning."

Mommy didn't answer, Toady wispered somepm to her.

"That's nice," Dale said, "wispering like that. *Some* manners you got all right, *so-ome* manners!"

If Mommy said to him "Nice way to talk to your Mommy!" then he'd say he was talking to Toady, not her. But they didn't either of em say anything.

"Mommy," Dale said, "watcha thinking about?"

She wouldn't say a word. Dale started to get scared. He knew she musta heard him go and tell.

"Mommy," he said, "Mommy!" But she didn't pay no attention and was rocking Toady and kinda crooning to him.

So Dale said "Mommy!" again and couldn't help getting pretty near blind he was so sore, and he said, "Mommy, Mommy, Mommy, Mommy!" over and over about seventeen times.

They kep right on just rocking and wispering ever once and a wile.

"Mommy! . . . Mommy! . . . Mommy-Mommy-Mommy-MOMMY-MOMMY-M O M M Y!!!"

It wasn't till they looked at each other and smiled, though, that he really blew up and yelled out:

"I know what, you love Toady the most! You don't love me a *tall!!*" he screecht. "You baby Toady all the time and you *hate* me!!!"

And Mommy said to Toady: "Doesn't he talk like a silly, Toddykins?"

So Dale blew up somepm terrable then, he kicked the door and hurt his foot because he only had sneakers on and he just howled, "Gaud dang ding BUST it!!!" and went out to the big sofa in the sitting-room and cried and cried, oh *gee*.

9.

Mommy didn't come and didn't come and he wanted to *kill* Toady, but it wasn't no use to go back there, not till he'd thought of somepm pretty smart to say to make em feel bad, and he saw the World Almanac where he'd left it to go to breakfast, he picked it up and crawled into the corner of the room behind the sofa and began to read about—that a cuss named Red Grange gained moren a mile for his team in one game or somepm, Dale couldn't make much sense out of it so he looked for somepm more fun and—here was about a Russian peasant lady wich had sixty-four children! Whee! That was a lot all right, but why the heck did the lady ask Gaud for so many?

He found some more pretty funny things too—and then Mommy came in to clean the room.

He could hear Toady outdoors a-wistling for Dinky, and Dink barking and probly just *rushing* up from the coulée. He wisht he could go out too, but Mommy was so

crabby at him he was a-scared to get lectured, he thought he better stay hid awile.

Mommy acted awful funny, though, wile she was sweeping, and made funny noises like Dinky did once and a wile—not like snoring a-course, but as if somepm hurt her—and Dale felt awful because he thought it was him. It didn't look like she knowed much what she was doing, she didn't get the dirt outa the corners good a *tall*, and once she poked Dale with the mop and never noticed he was there—just when he was kinda hoping she would find out and give him Hail Columbia. . . . He *wanted* to come out and ask her what hurt, but he thought well, maybe she would not-answer again and, oh gosh he couldn't *stand* that, so he stayed there in the corner behind the sofa and didn't breathe pretty near.

Once Mommy cried “Oh” so sudden he nearly jumped, but she never heard him . . . and then *wow!* Margaret and Stuffy came in the front door!

Dale could tell Stuffy was all smiley and kinda slick from the way he started in.

“G’mornin to you, Mrs. Summers!” he said. “Are we in time for brek——?”

He was gonna say Breakfast a-course, but he musta decided it wasn't no use to finish after he saw Mommy. Mommy was in the middle of the room with her broom in front of her slippers and probly her hands was on top the broom-handle like she always would stand when she was terrible mad. Dale couldn't see really but he knew how it was and—oh yes he *could* see her feet, and her toes was all wiggly inside her slippers.

Margaret acted like she hadn't noticed nothing and said: “Gaud, I'm dead.” But a-course she only meant she was tired.

Mommy didn't say a thing, except look at the two of em for the *longest* time, till Stuffy said “Well——” and commenced to leave. *Then* Mommy woke up—wow, she woke up all right.

“Stuffy Means, you stay here awile, I wanta talk to you!” Mommy yelled. “I wanta know where you two been all night!”

"Shush, Mother!" Margaret said, Smarty as usual, "you'll have the kids in here to see who murdered the dog."

"I guess I know what I'm doing," Mommy said, but just the same she didn't talk near so loud. "I wanta know all about it."

So Stuffy started in his long story with Mommy stopping him ever few seconds to find out if any of the homesteaders seen em, or anyone they knew in Santer Fee. He said they left the dance at the American Legend (wich Dale knew was a club for soldiers to have a good time in when they wasn't parading with meddles on) about one o'clock and went for a ride, but they didn't get very far. When they got pretty near some road house about fifteen miles from Santer Fee somepm went wrong with the magneto tank or somepm and Stuffy knew it would take a long time to fix it, so they went to the road house wich was a kinda garage too and he got Margaret a room and a man to help him fix the car. He said he worked all night and got it fixed about six and here they was and nobody seen em so far as he knew, he'd come round the other way so he wouldn't hafta pass close by the Sothebys' and that was why Mommy hadn't seen em coming.

"Well Stuffy——" Margaret started in but Mommy butted in talking kinda hoarse.

"Young man," she said, "I don't like the look in your eye, but if I thought anything happened in that road house you'd marry her to-day!"

Well gosh! that was funny. Dale thought maybe he didn't hear right so he tried hardern ever and inched out under the sofa a little to make sure what they all said. It was exciting!

Stuffy said: "But Mrs. Summers, you wouldn't think bad of your daughter like that, wouldja?"

A-course he was being slick. But Mommy didn't let him off easy, she never did when she was mad.

"My opinion of *you* is what counts," she said, "and it isn't much! I wanta know ever'thing about that road house business and ex-ackly how it happened!"

"Honessly!" Stuffy hollowed (he wasn't slick a tall now),

"honestly it was just like I said, Mrs. Summers, and Margaret'll prove it!"

"Oh——" Margaret said—but Mommy butted in again. (Gosh, Dale hadn't never heard Margaret shut up for anybody before when she wanted to talk, what was the matter with her?) Mommy said:

"Well, that sounds more like you meant it. I hope you do but I'm gonna keep track jussa same."

Then Stuffy was all slick again—Jimunny but he could change quick! He said: "A-course I can understand about you worrying, Mrs. Summers, and all that, but a-course axidunts *will* happen in the most high-tone families—and a-course we can't always help it—and so a-course——" On and on and on with that kinda tripe, wow it made Dale sick.

A funny thing happened then. Margaret went "Grrk!" and fell out of her chair onto the floor, and Stuffy and Mommy was *awful* excited and beat it and got water and the smell-bottle, and Dale was too! He couldn't hardly stay where he was, but they came back and justabout drowned Margaret and she woke up all of a sudden and looked fierce, and then wile she was still lying there and all of em was sitting on the floor, Mommy holding Margaret's head in her lap, Margaret said:

"Mother, I gotta tell you."

She waited a long time and then went on:

"It did happen."

Stuffy made an *awful* noise and Mommy kinda lurched up on her knees and let Margaret's head fall on the floor and said:

"What happened?"

Margaret looked sick and awful serious when she said:

"Ever'thing, Mother."

Oh gosh, it was terrable then.

Stuffy hollowed it wasn't so and groaned and carried on like he was scared to death, and there was Mommy a-stand-ing and twisting her apron to beat the band and saying over and over, "To think—a daughter of mine—a daughter of mine—to think!" and Margaret was hiding her face on the floor and sobbing. Dale began to feel sorta sick himself.

But he felt sicker in a minute. Mommy flopped down on the couch kinda hard and the springs wich was busted in one place came down and wallopt him a good one on the head and he went "Ow!" loud enough so they all heard, though Mommy was groaning and Stuffy howling about it wasn't true. Margaret turned her head and saw Dale.

Stuffy reached under the sofa and yanked him out, and then Dale couldn't remember much what happened after that.

10.

Some ways it seemed like it lasted five seconds, some ways it seemed like ten years. They was all sore anyhow, so they didn't care how hard they cracked him. They all just jumped on him. Mommy and all. They called him a Sneak and a Nusence and a Danged Fool and told him he was sure going to jail when he was big, and why couldn't he be good like that angel Toady, he was always so good. (*Oh yes! some angel!*) They told him again he was just an *awful* kid and if he told a word he'd listened to he would get licked worsen ever and locked up for a week without nothing to eat. Gosh sakes, they all hollowed at him so much and scared him so, he screecht and yelled somepm fierce, and when finely Stuffy kicked him outa the front door he was sure enough glad!

Jimunny! if he could only get even! He thought he did kick Stuffy *one* good one in the shins once, but he wasn't sure. Anyhow it couldn't have hurt as much as he hurt all over. No sir, he wasn't even with that Gaudawful Stuffy Means yet. Some day he'd catch him in a bear trap and then take a red-hot poker and cook his ears with it, put it up his nose and down his mouth and write his name all over his body with it like Mr. Manzanares did to his sheep. Dale could just smell that old Stuffy burn, and see him howling and pleading and promising to buy him all the toys in the world and—gee! . . . He shivered.

He went up to the haug-pen. Nobody could see him, so he cried. He was all sore. The haugs would come up

snorting and thinking he wsa gonna feed em. They began to act awful friendly, and that made Dale feel good pretty near.

But he got to thinking lotsa things, about how he didn't do anything so terrable in there, he hadn't meant to hide really but he just couldn't help it because he was a-scared to come out wile Mommy was so mad at him; and he got crying again and couldn't stop. this time, haugs or no haugs—gosh, he felt bad. He wisht Mommy wouldn't be so mad at him wile she petted Toady all the time. Why when Toady wasn't around, like yesterday most of the day, why Mommy was real nice with him, but when Toady was around (that *angel*—oh *gosh!* WOW!) when Toady was around then she always took his side and oh gee. There wasn't no use trying to be good when Toady was around because no matter what you did and no matter what Toady did he got petted and you got a licking. Oh why did Toady hafta be his whole brother anyhow?

Wile Dale was thinking along kinda about how he always got the worst of ever'thing and Toady got the best and there wasn't no use trying to be good, he saw the Scoot-Express wagon over by the shed and the gate was open all right and nothing in the way clear to the bottom of the coulée. He wanted to go down somepm Gaudawful. . . .

He sneaked a look all around ever'where.

Sam wasn't around.

Dads was away.

They was all busy in there feeling bad at the terrable thing wich had happened to Margaret. (Oh darn ding *bust* Margaret anyhow. *And* Stuffy.)

Maybe Mommy wouldn't care so awful much.

Or maybe she wouldn't ever know. . . .

There wasn't no use to be good when you got licked when you didn't do nothing. . . .

Well, Mommy couldn't hollow in time to stop him now. He was going some already. . . . Clear from the top! . . . Clear to the bottom!

There was a few ruts and rough places on account the rain was so hard yesterday, but he ducked by em all right

and he just *wizzed* down like *sixty* and shot part way up the other side! It made him feel great!

When he got to thinking of the licking they give him, though, he'd get sore and remember how they called Toady an angel. Pee-yugh!

Gee . . . that was funny. . . . There was Toady now, coming along with Dinky.

Toady was all happy and ever'thing. You could tell. He kinda skipped, holding a stick for Dinky to snap at. He hollowed:

"H'lo, Dale! Sam just gimme a piggyback wide and we heard a wattlesnake over in that clump of soapweeds' what Pansy likes to eat the flowers offa!"

He didn't know how sore Dale was, or how he'd got licked, or how they all hated him.

Little angel——

All of a sudden Dale hated him. His own brother, two years younger and goodern him and ever'thing. Hated him! He couldn't help it.

He saw Toady look and look at the Scoot, but he didn't say anything. Pretty soon Toady was walking along beside him up the hill and saying:

"Lemme go down, Dale."

Dale wanted to kinda snigger but he didn't, he just said:

"Oh *no*, Toady, Mommy doesn't want you to."

"Mommy doesn't want you to either," Toady said.

Dale did kinda smile then but he didn't say anything, he just got on the Scoot and went down again. Licketty-*split*—whee! . . .

Toady was waiting for him a-course when he got back up.

"Lemme just wide with you, then, Dale. I can sit in back all wight. I won't be in the way."

Dale just shook his head and got ready to go again.

"Please, Dale, I pwomise I won't tell!"

Dale just *looked* at him.

"*Please, Dale, please!*"

"What'll you give me, Toady?"

"I'll give ya . . . lessee . . . Oh! I *give* you that candy yesterday, Dale! I give you somepm alweady, so you gotta give *me* somepm now, and it can be the wide."

"Gosh, that candy wasn't much—not for a ride like this is gonna be."

Toady was pretty near crying now. He kinda wailed:

"I haven't got nothin' to give ya, Dale! Next time Mr. Bwyan buys me some candy I'll give it *all* to ya, though! *Please, Dale!*"

Dale thought: Well, if he didn't let Toady come Toady might go and tell Mommy on him.

"Well, . . . all right, get in. . . . Come on, hurry up and *come* if you're coming! I can't wait around for *you* all day."

But when they was all in, Dale didn't start.

"I dunno if I'll take you or not," he said.

"Oh *Dale!*" Toady whined. "*You said* you would! You *promised, Dale!*"

"Gosh sakes, don't make so much *noise*, Toady. They'll all hear. Don't be such a cry-baby anyhow. Listen: if they see us will you take all the blame?"

"Yes, Dale, I will."

"Will you say you started it and ever'thing?"

"Yes, Dale."

"No fingers crossed? Honest hope-to-die?"

"Yep, weally, Dale."

"Do you swear?"

"Oh Dale."

"You gotta swear!"

"Oh Dale!"

"Swear! Or I won't take you."

Toady didn't hardly say it a tall, but Dale heard him all right.

"Gaud damn."

"All right, good for you, Toady."

Dinky was waiting for em to start too, and when they did he went yapping along behind em to beat the band. Gosh! it was exciting! With the two of em in the Scoot they went much faster, Dale was pretty near scared almost and when they went through the gate about half way down he could feel Toady grab him, but before they knew it they was at the bottom and both of em crying from the wind!

They got out and laughed.

"Pooh, Toady," Dale said, "you was scared!"

"No I *wasn't*, Dale!" Toady hollowed. "I wasn't, *honest!* Let's do it again!"

They kinda watched the house to see if Dinky's racket had made em look out, but nobody showed up or said anything.

"Quick, Dale. Come on."

So they scrambled in any old way and started. This time Dinky got right in fronta the weels, and before they got going real fast Dale leaned way over to try to pick up a rock to chuck at Dink to get him outa the way. But he leaned over too far and . . . gee, he fell outa the Scoot

There he was in the road a-watching Toady go on licketty-split without him and Dinky still in fronta the Scoot. Toady went and grabbed the handle you steer with all right, but Dinky got him sorta rattled because he tried to steer outa the way of Dink and, oh Gaud! Dale hurt all over just from looking. Toady got in one of the hard ruts wich the rain had made and when he tried to get out of it he went off the side of the road and straight for the bob-wire fence.

Just before he hit the fence post he tried to scramble out, but he couldn't in time. He turned around and screecht: "Dale!" Oh, the look on his face! He was white and kinda green and his voice was high and not loud a tall. Dale hadn't never *been* so scared, he didn't have no feel in him anywheres and he couldn't hollow or nothing.

Then came that Gaudawful "Crrrack!" when the wagon went and wallopt the post.

Toady went shooting through the fence kinda between the wires and landed "Bump!" all soft, and never made a sound.

There was rocks there.

Dale yelled all right, but he couldn't hardly run. He didn't know where his legs were. They was all flab and rubbery.

He was cold too, kep a-shivering all the time he ran. But he got there.

Blood—*woo!* Blood—all in Toady's hair. You couldn't see his face.

"Mommy!"

Dale's mouth worked. His arms was weak as heck. He

couldn't—couldn't pick Toady up. Couldn't! Toady was all floppy.

"Mommy!" he screecht, loud as he could.

"*Mommy!* Toady's dead! Toady's dead! Toady's dead!"

He was yelling it—over and over. He jumped up in down. Danced like he was crazy.

"Mommy-Mommy-Mommy!"

Just when he began to cry and couldn't yell any more, they came running—all of em. Yelling too. Dale was all choky. They shoved him outa the way. Mommy's face looked green, like Toady's just before— Margaret went back for somepm. Stuffy picked up Toady and made for the house. Mommy kinda stumbling after. Dale too.

"Mommy!" Choking—oh Gaud. "Mommy, is he dead? Is he dead? Is he, Mommy? Mom-mee!"

They wouldn't tell him. That was the worst thing. They wouldn't tell him. Wouldn't pay no attention. Choking—choking—oh Gaud. They kep a-hollowing to each other—"Get this! Do that!"—wouldn't pay no attention to him.

Proibly because Toady . . . *was!*

If he tried to hang around they just pushed him. Once Margaret cracked him. Mommy was crying and crying.

He'd made Mommy cry and cry. He'd killed Toady and made Mommy cry and cry.

Oh! He couldn't stand it, that's all, he couldn't *stand* it.

They all went inside. He dassn't. He hung around the kitchen and danced up in down. About crazy. He had to *do* somepm.

Pretty soon he heard Stuffy's car around front go *Wrang-wrang-wrang* and then start *Prrrt-prrt-prrt-prrrrrrr!* and Stuffy went beating it up the road jouncing and banging somepm fierce.

Dale watched him. Going over to Mr. Bryan's. To telephone for a doctor maybe.

He rushed up to a window.

"Mommy! is Stuffy gonna go for a doctor?"

Mommy didn't say Boo to him. Just sat there rocking and crying. Then Margaret came to the door of the room

with a towel—it was all red. Blood—woo. She growled at him:

“Lot you care.”

Oh gosh—oh gosh—he *did* care! They wouldn’t never believe him but he *did*—Jimunny, hadn’t he killed Toady and made Mommy cry?

He listened awful hard to see if Toady made any noise. Once he thought he did—maybe he was alive! He listened some more but couldn’t hear nothing and—gosh, he couldn’t stand just waiting and listening, waiting and listening. He wanted to *do* somepm or have somebody do somepm to him. This was fierce. He couldn’t stand it. Maybe he could pray.

He looked around for a place but there wasn’t any. So he ran down to Pansy’s stall and kneeled down in some manure and said right out loud:

“Gaud, please don’t make Toady dead, make him alive, we pray Thee, don’t make him be dead, Gaud, please! I *didn’t* mean to, I *didn’t* mean to, but you can punish me jussa same if you want to. They won’t believe me but I never did mean to hurt Toady, why Toady’s my whole brother and youngern me and gooder too. *Please*, Gaud, world without end——”

He was a-feeling better already, but there was Sam going past the barn. Dale got up in a hurry so Sam wouldn’t see him praying. He got the manure off his legs as good as he could and came out and said:

“Hello, Sam.”

Sam just walked along, he saw Dale all right but just wouldn’t say Hello.

“Sam!”

Sam stopped a sec.

“If I was to stay here, Gumboats, I’d stay long enough to tan the hide offa yer.”

He went on down.

“But Sam! Tell me! Is Toady dead? Is he? Sam, you gotta tell me—they won’t!”

Sam wouldn’t turn around or stop, just said:

“No, but that ain’t your fault.”

(Hoor-ray! now Mommy'll stop crying!)

He wanted to say that, wanted to yell it all over, but he dassn't.

11.

It was a horrible day.

There wasn't no lunch except what Sam got for himself. Dale couldn't sit down anywheres or keep a-doing anything—all of a sudden he'd just hafta quit and cry.

Once he thought Well if he'd go and hurt himself real bad Toady wouldn't hurt so much and Mommy would like him better. So he went way out in the pasture where there couldn't nobody see him, near where Cincinnatus was grazing. There was a nice big cactus there and he was gonna sit right in it but he got some in his hand first by mistake and it hurt so Gaudawful he forgot all about sitting. He yelled "Ow!" and saw where his hand was all hairy with cactus. Cincinnatus kinda lifted his head and looked at him, chewing all the time, and didn't pay no more attention. That made Dale sore as heck and he picked up a rock and hit Cincinnatus in the belly with it and Cincinnatus just kicked up his heels and went off down to the coulée sorta smiling, Dale thought.

On the way back he went slow and pulled out the needles from his hand. It hurt somepm fierce and ever once and a while he'd cry, he couldn't help it.

Then he saw Dinky way off on the other side of the coulée with Pansy. Dale stopped and hollowed:

"Here, Dinky! Here, Dink!"

Pretty soon Dinky heard him! He came just *rushing*. He *wizzed* along, leaping the soapweeds and cactus and prairie-dog holes. Dinky sure could run! When he got to him Dinky yapped and jumped up on him and licked him and acted just as friendly as ever! Gosh how Dale loved him! He put his arms around him and hugged and squeezed him to death.

Ooh. Maybe he'd squeezed too hard. All of a sudden Dink yipped and iked like he was hurt and ran away and

wouldn't come back. A little ways off he stopped and scratched and licked. Maybe some of the cactus . . . Oh gee . . . he wisht old Dink would be friendly. . . .

He wondered where Dads was. He started to turn towards Santer Fee—but then he didn't look. Didn't dasst. The Sangry de Cristos was up that way, and the old woman Indian must be watching him. . . .

If only Dads was home. A-course he'd get a Gaudawful licking, but then maybe it would help. Anyhow he could find out from Dads how it was with Toady, and probly Dads would know how to make Mommy feel better. She might like him better after Dads had licked him good. Genally she did. But he kinda squirmed when he thought about the licking. When Dads was mad . . . !

Justabout when Dale had the last of the cactus out of his hand he saw the doctor come outa the house and walk up in down smoking a cigret with his Stetson pushed way back on his bald head—he musta come some time wile Dale was way up the pasture outa sight of the road. He wondered if Stuffy was back too.

Margaret musta seen him hanging round. After the doc had went back in she came out the kitchen door and said to him kinda strangely:

"Thanks to you, Dale Summers, Toady's gonna be blind in one eye."

Somepm got on fire inside him and burned out to the ends of his arms and legs, and was in his eyes and throat.

Then he got to thinking how sore Margaret was at him, and remembering how she always tried to get even, and he thought probly she was trying to make him feel bad.

"Where's Mommy?" he ast her.

"Where's Mommy?" she copycatted him, all Smarty again. "Is that all you can find to say after what you done? 'Where's Mommy!' She's busy. She won't wanta see you anyhow!"

Margaret *was*. She *was* trying to make him feel worse. He felt better.

He walked off kinda like he didn't care, just to show her, and went off towards the coulée. Wild verbena grew along

the bottom of it, running a purple river all the way. It was great, lotsa the cactuses was in bloom the color of lemons; anything wich was a long distance off sizzled and sorta lifted up offa the ground. You could see through the watermelon-mountn justabout, it was so much like glass that somebody'd breathed on. And the sun was a-coming down awful slow like a balloon that isn't new any more. . . . Dale looked and looked. . . . It was funny, ever'thing was just like it always was and it didn't seem right.

He hardly knew where he was till he heard a grunt and found he was right at the haug-pen and the haugs was asking him for some chuck.

Haug was nice. . . .

Maybe the doctor would fix Toady's eye.

Poor Toady. Dale tried to see him with one eye all white and blind like that old Mexican beggar he'd seen one time in Santer Fee. He couldn't—not Toady. He'd always see him laughy and glad the way he was before they started down—— Wow! poor Toady. Why wouldn't they let him see him? Was it so horrible? . . . Well he would. He would see him. . . . Or he'd write him a letter. He'd write him and tell him he could have Dinky's cart all to himself and—and play dolls with the Humpty-Dump all he wanted and . . . and Toady wouldn't have to give him *any* of the candy Mr. Bryan bought for him if he ever did. . . . That's what he'd do, write to Toady.

He mooched up to the house and—gee! they was all at supper.

Margaret frowned at him.

"Washed?" she ast him, all ready to hop on him.

Dale said, "Yop"—but he kep his hands in his lap as much as he could.

12.

He couldn't sleep. It was fierce. He was so hot and he'd turn over and over and *over*, and sometimes he'd feel like he was in a merry-go-round spinning and all dizzy—his belly

was up in his throat and he was falling outa the cart—Gaud! There was Toady's face floating in front of him sick-looking and pale and kinda green, it just stayed there and floated wile he sat in the road and waited for that "Crrr-ack!" when the Scoot would wallop the post. Then Toady was shaming him with his finger but saying to Mommy, "It's all my fault, Mommy, weally"—but saying it in Mommy's voice, not in his own.

Dale said to Dale, "This is a dream, wake up"—and sure enough it was! He knew how it was now. Mommy and Margaret was in the next room, and Mommy was a-telling Margaret how Toady had took all the blame for the accident.

Toady . . . took all the blame. . . .

Dale just *squirmed*. He hid his head under the covers. But he was sweaty and all wide awake. Pretty soon he came up. They was still talking.

"Bet Dale made him," Margaret said, and Dale coulda killed her. "You don't know that kid as well as I do. He's *awful*, Mother. Getting worse all the time, too."

"I know." Mommy talked low, like she was trying not to screech. Then she pretty near did: "Oh, it's the way we *live*! It's this dreadful homestead, the dreadful people around us—Kirschmeyers, *foreigners*! Why it's no wonder! I keep telling myself that, but it don't make it any less hard. I thought of it about you this morning. Awful things are bound to come—to *all* of us! It's no wonder! And it's the same with him—think of the children he goes to school with—Mexicons and Eyetalians and all—*Catholics*, Margaret! You can't tell *what* he learns from them. My, he'll probly come home some day crossing himself or praying in Latin! . . . Oh! I hope the crop gets *rooned*!" she hollowed, "worsen last year! Then Todd Summers may get over his foolishness and move back to Kansas or some spectable place and make a little money and look after his family!"

"All the same," Margaret said, "I wisht he was home. He . . . he'd run ever'thing, he . . ." She didn't want Mommy to know what she was gonna say, so she stopped. Or else she wanted Mommy to say "What?" She'd act like

that with Dale often, and Dale would never say "What?" just to make her mad.

Mommy didn't say it either. She said:

"I wish he was too. He's . . . strong anyhow. He'd . . . *do* somepm anyhow. We wouldn't . . . I . . . Oh I don't know *what* to do about *anything*!"

She cried, awful quiet, just snuffling ever once and a wile. It started Margaret off too.

Jimunny Crissmuss! after that walloping he got yesterday—no, *this* morning, here he was listening again!! He thought he'd better yell and tell em he could hear, but just then Margaret said:

"Well, do you think I haven't got somepm to cry about? It's past ten, Mother! He's not coming back! He's gone away!"

She just boo-hooed like Toady then, and Dale just *had* to hear what came next. He'd hollow pretty soon and tell em.

Maybe Mommy patted her on the back or somepm, because Margaret cried hardern ever and Mommy kep a-saying:

"There, daughter, there. Maybe he's just gone away for a day or two. Or maybe he's right in Santer Fee thinking it over. Stuffy likes you, he wouldn't run away like that. There, there."

Oh! it was Stuffy they was talking about, not Dads. You sure has to keep your ears peeled to catch ever'thing.

"Yes he would, Mother," Margaret said, and it sounded like she was talking into her piller or hanky or somepm, "yes he would, and I know he *has* gone, too. He's been talking a long wile about a job in Denver he knows about."

"What are you talking about?" Mommy said. "Why whatever——? Why, didn't he say he was gonna marry you this morning? He wouldn't go off like this. He likes you, he wouldn't go off like that. He said he'd *try* to come to-night. Maybe he'll come to-morrow after store time."

Wow! Margaret was gonna marry that Stuffy Means!

Dale could just see her shake her head and wipe her nose when she answered Mommy and said "Doe" instead of "No."

Then he knew she was getting up and going to the window. Mommy was trying to cheer her up.

But Margaret said from over by the window: "It's *doe* use, Mother. You see, I *doe*!"

"Know what? Why do you act so queer, Margaret?"

(Yea-ea for Mommy!)

"Well I *doe* he won't cub back."

"Won't come back? Why that's foolish, daughter——"

"Mother, I *doe*," Margaret said again. "I—I—don't blame Stuffy . . . if he *does* go way!"

"The idear!" Mommy was all mixed up. So was Dale. He listened and listened. Then Margaret went on.

"You see, I . . . lied . . . about . . . things!"

She broke down again and cried pretty hard.

Whatsat?" said Mommy, kinda waking up.

"I lied!" Margaret hollowed, she didn't care who could hear now. "I didn't faint really! Nothing *did* happen except just like Stuffy told you! I lied! I lied!"

"Well . . ." Mommy sounded like anything might happen now and she wouldn't give a cuss. She talked sorta dreamy like when she rocked Dale in the kitchen:

"Why? . . . What is it? . . . My Margaret isn't a bad girl. . . . Why? . . ."

"Oh *Mother!*" Margaret kinda sobbed, "wasn't you ever a girl? I wanted Stuffy, I wanted him somepm terrable, somepm *terrible* . . . and I thought he did too but . . . I was scared you'd make all kindsa trouble on account he was from New Mexico and a Catholic and not exackly spectable, that's what I was most scared of—oh! I didn't *plan* it, Mother! I didn't plan it, it just popped out. And when it worked and in the middle of all the excitement this morning he said he would," she screecht, "I was so *happy!* And *now*——"

"*Shush!* Sh-sh-sh," Mommy said, and ever'thing was awful quiet all of a sudden, and then Toady made a noise from Mommy's room where he was. "I thought so," Mommy said, and they both beat it to Toady.

Margaret was gonna marry Stuffy only Stuffy ran away—whee! . . .

They came into Margaret's room again but they whispered, so as to let Toady get to sleep again, and Dale was getting awful sleepy too and was just about going off again when Mommy said:

"There don't seem to be any discharge to speak of. The doctor said——"

Margaret shushed her, but pretty soon she forgot and said real loud:

"Oh, I'm *sure* he's gonna be all right, Mother! The worst'll be the scar, but I'm sure he's gonna be all right."

Toady was gonna be all right! He wasn't gonna be blind! Not even in one eye! He could play and ever'thing . . . not hafta sit in the street selling pencils . . . Dads maybe wouldn't lick so hard now . . . he could stand it so long as Dads just used his hand, not the strap. . . . Glad he hadn't wrote that letter . . . see Toady to-morrow maybe . . . tell him he could have half of Dinky's cart . . . wouldn't say nothing about the Humpty-Dump. . . . "It's all my fault, Toady, and I'm sorry." . . . Might as well . . . they was all saying it anyhow. . . . Dads would think it was manly. . . .

13.

He had a lotta bad dreams and didn't wake up till breakfast was all over. He got dressed, pretty scared, and say! Mr. Bryan was talking to Margaret in the sitting-room. They didn't say Boo to him and stopped talking. Dads must be home!

He went in the kitchen and grabbed some bread and slathered jam on it and hustled because there was Dads and Mommy coming in from outdoors. Mommy was whispering kinda fierce, "You're just a child, Todd—all this high-tone talk doesn't fool——" when she found out Dale was in the kitchen. Then she stopped and Dale beat it through the sitting-room and out the front door.

Whee! what a day. Yesterday was all mixed up like the bad dreams, but to-day—— Oh gee . . . he just remembered. Toady was gonna be all right! *Ever*'thing was all

fixed pretty near. But the licking . . . Dale wisht that was over too or maybe wouldn't come, so he could explode like he always did on a day like this. It was great! Just explode, make a lotta noise and run and jump and ever'-thing, till Sam would say you looked like an elphunt doing the minuetty and sounded like the steam calliowp playing opra! Good old Sam!

Maybe Sam wouldn't *be* mad to-day as long as Toady was gonna be all right. . . .

"Dale! I wanta speak to you."

Gosh, the shivers started up in down Dale's back and he didn't think he could ever turn around and look at Dads.

But he did finely, and Dads was so big and kinda quiet and not mad-looking a tall, that he just cried and cried and ran to him and said first thing:

"Oh Dads! it's all my fault, don't believe Toady, it *is*, go ahead and lick me, Dads!"

(Gaud, please don't let him.)

Dads just kep a big arm like a post around Dale's shoulder and didn't say a thing and Dale wanted to *die*. They walked along together. Wile Dale stopped his boo-hooing he'd kinda look up at Dads and hope folks was right when they said he was gonna be big like Dads some day.

Dads didn't have his overhauls on yet, but still they sat right on the ground on a little hill looking down into the coulée full of purple flowers.

When Dale quit crying Dads said:

"I been talking a long wile to your Mommy and Margaret, Dale. They said you wasn't sorry at all, but I know you are."

He was so sad, Dale pretty near started in again, but he made an awful face and kep it in, and made his head go up in down for Yes.

Dads started awful slow. He had to talk awile before he got going real good. He said he didn't see how a licking would help Toady's eye, and Toady was the one to think about in all this business.

"O Dads!" Dale hollowed, "is he gonna be blind in that eye?"

Dads put his arm back round Dale's shoulder and said:
"No, Dale. The doctor is sure he can save it all right. But I meant the pain. Licking you won't take the pain out of it for Toady."

He wasn't gonna get licked. He wasn't gonna get licked! . . . But a-course he couldn't *look* glad.

"Oh, Dads!" he said, "I know you're just trying to make me feel good, and Toady is gonna *be* blind! Please lick me, Dads, I'll feel better, please, Dads!"

He meant it now. At least——

But Dads didn't understand. He *laughed*.

He laughed! . . . Margaret had tried to make Dale feel bad about it, and now here was Dads trying to make him feel *good*. He didn't wanta feel no *worse* about it, but jussa same he didn't wanta feel *good*—— He just wanted . . . Oh, he didn't know *what* he wanted!

He had to listen to Dads.

Dads wasn't sad a tall now. He was talking to beat the band, saying how we all hafta try all the time to be good and when we stop trying awful things happen like this. They happen because we let em. Because we stop trying. Because we get sick of trying. Because . . .

Dale was thinking about the terrable thing wich had happened to Margaret wich she lied about. She was gonna marry Stuffy and then she lied about the thing and so now she wasn't *gonna* marry him. Dale was all mixed up and he wisht Dads would tell him about Margaret, there was lotsa things he didn't half know and he wisht Dads would tell about *them*——

He kinda woke up when Dads said Margaret's name.

"She was just looking for a good reason to be bad and tell that lie, Dale, the one you heard her tell when you listened. Because it *was* a lie. Nothing terrable did happen to Margaret. She was just looking for a reason to lie. She thought she couldn't get what she wanted unless she lied. People is always looking for good reasons not to be good, I suppose you thought you had a good reason for going coasting down that hill?"

(Shucks! that was all about Margaret.)

"Yes Dads, I did! It was because they all——"

"You see, we all *think* we have good reasons to do wrong things, but we find the reasons are never good enough, and that's why we're unhappy, Dale. And when we're unhappy we always blame it on somebody else, or on the place we live in, or the things that happen around us. I been saying the same things to your Mommy and sister, Dale, and they wouldn't see for a long time, till finely they did or said they did. People don't wanta see the real things of life because then it's straight up to em to live by em. Now here, Dale, we have ever'thing we really need to be happy."

He went on and on about that they had plenty to eat and good water right in their own well and didn't hafta haul it three miles like poor Granma Schnepfel did and her son Mr. Schnepfel; and there was the mountns and the beyootiful sunshine most ever day, and friends and genrous neighbors like Mr. Bryan and Sue Bryan and ever'body, and rabbits in the pasture and the 'verbena like a long purple snake along the bottoms of the coulées. . . .

Dads looked kinda sad when he finished that part. Dale wondered if he was thinking of the prairie-dogs and coyotes and rattlesnakes and droughts and hailstorms-in-June and cutworms. . . .

"But when we *have* done wrong, Dale," Dads started in again, "we oughta have somepm remind us so we won't do it again, and that's what punishment is."

Dale's legs kinda wiggled. He thought the licking was coming after all. But he didn't feel like crying now a tall. Dads had laughed at him, when he *meant* what he said—he did too! And now he was gonna get licked. . . .

"You did wrong with the wagon, Dale, so I'm gonna give the wagon to Toady and forbid you ever to touch it."

"O Dads——!"

Dale boiled all inside. He wanted to say, "Well, it's *my* wagon—Jimunny Crissmuss!—it's not yours *to* give to Toady!" But Dads looked at him so mad all of a sudden! He thought he'd better not say it. He knew what he'd do, though. He'd just not go and see Toady, he wouldn't give

him half of Dink's cart, or let him play dolls with Humpty-Dump, or anything.

But he said:

"All right, Dads."

"And will you try *hard* to be good, Dale? Don't forget you nearly killed a human being."

You bet he'd make Toady give him ever bit of candy Mr. Bryan got him, too, like he'd promised.

"I'll try Dads. But I didn't mean to kill Toady."

Dads didn't understand. *He* didn't know *ever*thing.

Dads watched him sorta funny awile. He didn't *say* no more but looked like he was thinking lotsa things. Then he got up and went towards the house. He didn't pet Dale, he just walked like he wanted to get away. What was he mad at now?

Just before they got to the kitchen door he turned and looked straight at Dale.

"Dale, I'm sorry for you," he said.

But he didn't look a tiny bit sorry. He looked like he wisht he'd licked him.

Dads went in the house.

Where Toady was in bed, . . . where Mommy was. . . .

Sam was mad at him. . . . Anyway, he wasn't around. . . .

Nobody was.

And when Dale turned around so they wouldn't see the tears, he forgot and squinted over at the Sangry de Cristos, and there was that old woman Indian a-sitting all hunched up with the patchy shawl over her head. She was looking at him, just looking at him, looking into him, looking right through him, looking, . . . looking . . .

WILLIAM ELLERY LEONARD

UNPUBLISHED LEAVES

From the Ms. of *Two Lives*

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

Two Lives was published in its definitive form. The many manuscript-stanzas (of 1913) omitted (already from the private printing of 1922) were omitted as embarrassing the concentration, mood, and rhythm of the story as a whole. Those here published, however, may interest readers familiar with the poem and possibly offer other readers some values for whatever of human life they suggest in themselves. They make (in contrast to *Two Lives*) merely a sonnet-sequence, with the background of events in the shadows . . . the insanity and suicide of the wife . . . the grief and the calumny for the husband . . . all in this contemporary prosperous America of ours.

1. ADVENTURERS . . .

(A Proem)

Adventurers, from voyagings returned,
Whether beyond Antarctic Erebus,
Whether through Congo's forests back to us,
Tell what of wild and wondrous things they learned,
What blizzards blinded, or what fevers burned,
And how, when almost perishing afar
(Now sound again, except a crutch or scar),
For home and song ineffably they yearned.
We read their books, with maps in blues and reds,
And landscapes pictured under alien suns,
Or under sultry moon or frosty star;
Then, studying their portraits, bearded heads,

Thrill into words: "O these the mighty ones,
These the strong heroes,"—as indeed they are.

Adventurer, from voyagings which passed
Beyond earth's continents, whilst things befell
Which none who've met before ere lived to tell,
Am I, it seems: the first, perhaps the last.
You shall not see my portrait, and my name
You must forget; but, if you read my book,
Though unadorned, you'll say (by pause or look):
"Man still is man, even when without his fame."
You need not say "a hero." . . . Yet regard
This tale at least in one respect like theirs:
That, urged like them, by what of high and hard
I found in awful tracts of Otherwheres,
I made my notes with an Explorer's pen,
And, coming home, dared write them out for men.

2. COMMENT

*(On the stanza of Two Lives, beginning "I came from years
already grim . . . with gruelling adventures." Part I, II.)*

'Tis no self-pity, with an 'O-how-long,'
'Tis no self-love, with 'yet-I-mastered fate,'
That rivets that stanza to the iron gate
Whereby ye enter this demesne of song.
Here as I open the black bolts and strong,
Whilst first ye look upon this new estate
Of the still-living Muse, read once again
That scroll: brief record of my strife with Pain
In years before. Thus, when ye meet his face
Herein, hereafter,—more wrinkled, leathern, grim,—
Meet Pain more fierce with many-spikèd mace,
His body sprouting many a strange new limb,—
Ye'll know with what a desperate embrace
'Twas mine a second time to strive with him. . . .

A second time with what a weary back,
 And scarred, bent shoulder; for the first had been
 A strife to me so memorably keen,
 That now I said, "No more can Pain attack
 With such a might, and now I know his worst."
 Yet though still weak from battles unforget,
 With tongue still sanded from old fear and thirst,
 I hoped; for hope was in this inland spot,
 Twin of its inland beauty. So I wrote
 My friend (my friend who knew, from talks together
 In sea-board cities, through what world of weather
 I'd kept for years my little bark afloat):
 "Rejoice with me; at last the tempests cease;
 I've come to land; I've found my work, my peace."

3. LET THE PAST DIE

Friends tell me (friends in life and books well read):
 "Let your Past die with all its grief and riot."
Let the Past die!—The past is never dead!
 Not at high noon! Not in the starry quiet!
 My Past is gesturing in this limp you pity,
 And whitens in this scar against the blast,
 And not a tree, a book, a song, a city,
 But has today its meaning from my Past.
 There is, good friends, scant wisdom in this "letting";
 I *am* my past so long as I am I;
 And in a brave reshaping, not forgetting,
 Is my one hope and action not to die:
 The Past that might have killed me if it could
 I sternly mould to art and hardihood.

.

4. HEIRS

When ye began, ere yet her flesh was cold,
 To rifle chest and drawer, and bag for thrift
 Each chasèd goblet and each jewelled gift,

Think ye I cared for what I lost in gold?
When ye began, ere yet her flesh was cold,
To smirch, with desperate slander black and swift,
The man of grief whom ye had cast adrift,
Think ye I cared for my good name of old?—
How could ye, could ye, ye whom the dear dead
Had loved so long the dearest, next to one
Who planted vines with her and shared her bed
(Bed in the windowed moonlight, vines in sun),
So mock the memory of that sacred head
And all the gentle deeds that she had done.

.

When Love's dear relics were exposed to view
On court-house table and bossed with our state-seal,
Intestate, with the sire's intestate too,
The Civil Law that guards our commonweal
Decided all, like Solomon deciding
Between the women,—rather, *not* as he;
For *his* decision reckoned the Abiding,
And followed from his cunning sympathy
With the heart's ownership. Who once did ask
Of me heart's ownership?—Who ever said,
“Has this or that some touch of your dear dead,
Whereby 'tis yours?”—The law fulfilled its task
(Mistake me not, it did) : much can be done,
When heirs are reckless of the other one,

Done strictly after law. . . . And I demurred
But once, once only. O the foolish aim,
The dazed boy-impulse of my honest word
Protesting!—Friends (I mean in fact, not name),
Can you conceive me, when I here confess
I spoke O not to gain myself a jot,
A tittle, of the cursèd golden pot,
But as defender of her defenselessness . . .
As still the guardian of her right—a fool,
Whose eyes, though they had seen the coffin hid,
Whose ears, though they had heard the sod on lid,

Still saw, still heard her . . . as a child from school,
 Who feels its own dead mother on the stair,
 And sets her place at table and her chair.

And now three years have passed; and I, for one
 Who walked in tattered shoes from hill to coast
 Long years in youth, with friends a comic toast
 At Grub-street banquets, I the ragged son
 Of pauper Johnson, brother of Chatterton,
 Am now, despite whatever the Law withdrew,
 Still "comfortably fixed," with Stocks (a few)
 And Mortgages (still ripening in the sun
 Of Six Per Cent). . . . Yes, "comfortably fixed,"
 As say my messmates at the Club.—And she,
 With whom alone it would have been to me
 Some comfort, now irrevocably mixed
 With Earth, the Bosomer!—How often, friends,
 Think you, I reckon up my dividends?

5. IF EVER THIS BOOK . . .

If ever this book (as Art from Thought and Sorrow)
 Shall lie for sale (with Dante) in the shops,
 Public (like chimes in spires) to fools and fops,
 Then I must front new martyrdoms tomorrow;
 Old tongues will shout: "Aside from shameless lies,
 You've thieved the hearth-fire from our household gods,
 Outraging private fates and sacred ties" . . .
 And those same tongues (awhile) shall have the odds . . .
 Yet is the story mine . . . because the pain . . .
 Was mine . . . the mastery of pain was mine . . .
 And mine the shaping instinct and endeavor:
 This were Art's right of eminent domain,
 Even had that House itself, on seal and line,
 Not cancelled the ties . . . all ties . . . with me . . . for-
 ever.

6. BUT YE, THAT FACTION . . .

But ye, that faction of our citizens
 Who in my manhood's grief upon me spat,
 O ye whose heart-of-snake and brain-of-gnat,
 Like the brief offspring of the pools or fens,
 Spawned the green speech wherewith ye hoped to kill
 Or exile me, what time I lifted eyes
 From bride-in-coffin to the vacant skies
 Domèd above this city memorable;
 Ye cruel ladies with the scarlet tongue,
 Ye cruel gentlemen with brazen tooth,
 Ye shamers of the city whence ye sprung,
 This city of sunlight and immortal truth,
 Ye too shall find your good (if good it be)—
 To be remembered in the world with me.

7. PORTRAIT-BUST

Now Slander's argument had climbed the Hill,
 And got good welcome from my Campus Chief:
 A gentleman, who, carved in high-relief
 By some keen sculptor of defiant skill,
 Would show the small eyes of a cynic will,
 And mouth well-poised for wine and garnished beef,
 And beard (well-cropped van Dyke) to stroke in grief—
 When grief might serve his turn with Madame Thrill
 Or Bishop Cant. Hence I was not for him,
 Nor he for me. Yet was it not most black,
 To nurse advantage thus, Professor Trim,
 For cunning stab upon a broken back? . . .
 You've quit our halls: and meantime I discuss
 With point "Prometheus Bound" of Æschylus.

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8. ILL BY MY COTTAGE . . .

Ill by my cottage, pacing to and fro,
 Unstrung and haunted, the wreckage of my years
 Wrestling with horrible obsessions, fears
 And melancholias—thus he found me; so
 He thus began: "Poseur and coward, know
 I'm the true friend to make a man of you;
 You would be thought a genius, being blue,
 And crave for coddling."—"O for God's sake, O" . . .
 I shrieked . . . "Come, come, sir, look me in the eye"
 (Magniloquently pounding with his cane);
 "Each friend of yours now thinks the same as I"
 (This, as it proved, was O the cruel lie!) . . .
 I gripped his arm, in agony of pain—
 In agony as one about to die.

"Remember what I've suffered—the dead wife,
 The Slander"—"Well, that's months ago, old top"
 (His very words). "Buffoon, blasphemer, stop!
 Stop, stop! Or, it will cost you yet your life."
 Then, in collapse, I stumbled up the path,
 He after me (still aiming to restore);
 My white-haired father helped me through the door,
 His gentle eyes aflame with solemn wrath,
 That cowed him into flight. . . . The harm was done . . .
 The neighbors came . . . the bed prepared . . . the shade
 Drawn to the sill . . . to take once more the sun
 Away from me . . . afraid . . . afraid . . . afraid . . .
 In horror of the very pillow where
 I burrowed in despair . . . despair . . . despair.

I waive the months thereafter. Take a hint,
 All people: If some roving yokel ran
 Across a cripple binding to a splint
 (Some roadside makeshift, cornstalk or rattan)
 His shattered leg-bone, and thereby began
 To tear it off by pounding with a flint,
 And wrapt the wound in thistle-leaves for lint,

Were he indeed the good Samaritan?
 Would we not hale him into court, insane
 Or brute? But monstrously at large there plod,
 Assuming a license from all-seeing God,
 The yokels, lighting on the crippled brain,—
 Or, since those fiercer wounds don't bleed with blood,
 Think you they're not tenfold the wounds of pain?

9. THE PHOBIAC¹

What sonneteer culling his rhymes to twist
 Chaplets for love or death, would not draw back,
 Outraged that I besing the Phobiac—
 And "bizarre theme, and sanctioned by no list
 Of themes yet indexed by anthologist,"
 Aver reviewers. And my friends: "you lack
 A just reserve; don't empty out the sack
 Of private ails, self-pitying egotist."
 Three brief replies: the form my message takes
 Grows not from mode but from my nature's need,
 And what most haunts and hounds the artist makes
 That artist's theme—though lip and tongue should bleed.—
 As for a private ail—think you I pen
 A diary?—I who am a thousand men?

The Phobic shapes of that one Terror come
 Up from the underworld of mind: wild thought
 Succeeding thought,—yet with fierce cunning wrought,
 Self-wrought of one inveterate mother: some
 Will harry when I hear a bell or drum,
 Some with the thunder or the dark, but known
 The longest those that grip me when alone
 On heath, or hill, or highway, pale and dumb.
 And Reason, still unshaken from her place,
 And Senses still as clear as moon or sky,

¹These verses were written some thirteen years ago. For a full and scientific treatment of such psychic phenomena, see my forthcoming study (in prose), *The Locomotive-God*.

And Will and Strength of arm and foot and face,
 Observe the Thing—and stand all helpless by!
 And if I strive to jest It off, my laugh
 Sounds like a craven cynic's epitaph.

And yet so alien that Mood (abhorred
 By all my best of man), in earlier days
 (Before we'd tracked the mind from maze to maze
 Down to its dark abysses), priest or lord
 Would verily have cloven me with a sword
 Or whipped me to the dusty wastes, as one
 Possessed by demons,—fatal, foul, undone—
 Or bound me in a cavern with a cord.
 Or but some paltry decades back, the wise—
 An aunt, a family doctor, and a friend—
 Would have obtained, with puzzled, tearful eyes,
 A writ of court whereby a while to send
 Me—(me of all men, toughest-braced in brain,
 Through long endurance)—to house with the Insane.

And still the many-headed Ignorance
 Stalks round me with its counsel: very grim
 It is to hear its fat lips bluster: "Whim,
 Sheer sulky whim,—why look you so askance?—
 Have you seen goblins by a moor or manse,
 Or borrowed coward legs of frog or hare?"—
 Whilst in those wondrous clinics over there
 Study the Viennese and men of France
 The lore of such distress,—O friends afar
 Unknowing me, high names that not today
 Nor yet tomorrow (poems being what they are)
 Shall sound in others' verse: upon my way
 Ye light the helpless, Freud, Du Bois, Janet,—
 For your deep books do cluster to a star

A lode-star unto the supreme domain
 Of selfhood in last triumph over self . . .
 I speak not, as a volume on the shelf,
 Old platitudes: *this* triumph's not o'er pain,

O'er sin, o'er passion, o'er a grief in vain—
Though such I boast—but over what has grown
To have within myself a self its own,
And to defy my brain, by yet my brain.
'Twill be a triumph of a long campaign
Captained by science. Up from in me grew
This Monster Terror. Gain by subtle gain,
What thought long fostered thought shall yet subdue,
As night by night down in the mind's great deep
Thought sends its thought to rive it whilst I sleep.

What thought long fostered thought shall yet subdue
As night by night down in the mind's great deep
Thought sends its thought to rive it whilst I sleep:
"Red Devil, I no longer shrink at you."
Meantime by daylight is there work to do
On that same Devil; every hour to say:
"I am thy master; thou shalt pass away"—
Until some morn shall prove my Science true.
And when that morn shall come, as come it must,
And Life restores to me the golden key
And freedom of her City, I shall stand
Ever thereafter, of the sons of dust,
Ever thereafter in that City, he
Most fit to guard her people and command.

.

10. QUEER PEOPLE

We who have passed beyond the city gates,
The dancing and the barter and the beer,
And fought with beast on starry hilltops sheer,
Or manned the life-boat, shouting to our mates
Among the icebergs in the gusty straits,
Or charged in battle-smoke as cannoneer,
Seem, on our coming home, "a little queer"
To garrulous neighbors, scratching on their pates.
Good neighbors, we are not less sound of brain,
For all the shock, the terror, and the pain . . .

But rather more. Our oddities and acts
 Need not your sympathy or gossip: they
 Do but disturb the issues of your day
 By higher values, founded on new facts.

11. NEW INSIGHT . . .

New insight from my fearlessness and pain,
 Which I would chronicle: but be you one
 Who clasps his Wordsworth, Browning, Tennyson,
 As revelation of *all* spirit-gain
 In Life, the Terrible, you'll learn of me
 Little. But let me tell you that I tried
 Their gold by touchstone of my agony,
 Testing their best of wisdom, when she died,
 A thousand times; and tallied sound with sound,
 Their verses by my beating heart, and found
 They rang scarce true, as tested by that heart
 Which has become the tuning-fork for art
 Along the deeper octaves.—Goethe only
 Came home to me, when I was most, most lonely.

What spiritual good?—Well, first a hint
 From foresaid words about the bardic three:
 The utter blackness gave new eyes to see
 What truly counts—to tell the living flint
 (That showers the sparks across this cave of earth)
 From simulating limestone, where it beds
 In sturdy nodules of enduring worth,
 Whereof men get the fire, the arrowheads,—
 The hearth and its defenses. In that dark
 I invoiced Life, with fingers of the soul—
 All books, philosophies, and all my friends
 I invoiced. And when I set down a mark,
 It was a cryptic sign, with seal and scroll,
 That meant new judgments made for some new ends.

.

. . . Descend to Hell

And whirlwind, and arise to Day more strong,
And know man's Consciousness in its *full* dower:
Namely, in its Intensity and Power.

"In its Intensity": In daily life
We know not what it is to be alive;
All our routine is whittling with a knife;
Or beating with a tom-tom at the hive;
We hear the belfry clock and call it Time;
We meet a shadow, and say "good morning, *Friend*";
We see about us books and lamp and rime
On winter windows, as we sit and blend
With our surroundings. But Intensity
Is not of such; nor yet of peace or joy,
In its last revelation: there must be
Grief and remorse, seething in fierce alloy
With anger and terror, ere we once may guess
The unutterable Life of Consciousness.

"And in its Power": Again, in daily life
We know not what it is to be alive:
We quicken step to shrilling of the fife;
We play at checkers and suppose we strive;
We touch our spirits with a spur of wax,
When drowsy, saying, "We've a will to drive";
We chop a dead reed with a wooden axe;
We douse our head in bowl and think we dive.—
We play with action: yet the Power of Mind's
Not in the game. But when it takes its own
Distorted shreds, unravels, knots, and binds
(Nor asks of God or Devil gift or loan),
Circled by scoundrel foes, then first we guess
The startling Energy of Consciousness.

JOHN RIORDAN

SHORE WAYS

JIM, Jack, and Bill wanted a hell of a good time Labor Day. They wanted to be rough, their work during the week wasn't any aid to staying in the town during the week-end, they wanted to blow out and blow up the town. They jumped down to the roughest beach they knew of, prepared for a rough and tumble. Bill wore flannels and a sweater, Jack knickers, and Jim corduroys and sneakers. They felt free of their clothes, their excursion promised all they had thot about during the week.

Getting settled was a tough time. All the cottages had been taken a month back, and the holiday crowd was spreading into the rooming houses. They toted their little boston bag with its precious cargo all over the beach till they came upon a place they liked. Their choice fixed between a small, nice room—ocean air, light, comfort, screened—and a very large room with makeshift holiday accommodations: the beds had no mattresses, and springs which were rotten and humpy. Jim talked it over carefully with the landlady. Jack wanted the comfort, Bill wanted the fun of suffering for his fun. The big room was cheaper, so they took it. Jim began figuring out ways to use it. He got around the landlady, telling her how to turn it into a tea-room, estimating the cost of lumber, and the poor worried scheming old lady put a phonograph into their new little home.

So they began pushing things around. Here was a great big space with cupboards at one end and a screen around their beds. A porch and an ocean stood in front. They examined all the cupboards before stowing their baggage and the bottle of Scotch in a place so out of the way that Jim nearly dislocated his shoulder getting it there. It was a very nice dusk when they went out to eat. There wasn't a place to really eat in, and they didn't care much about eating anyway. So they grabbed sandwiches, coffee, and

that stuff at a lunch stand, then went to look for girls. Bill and Jim had been here before and knew a whole gang of fellows, besides having prior rights on a few girls. Jack didn't know anyone. This was all new to him. He looked and listened without stopping. "By God," he said to Bill, "let's burn up in this hell hole. This is good. By God." They couldn't find their girls. They stopped to joke with others. This was easy. Bill had the dope on it. He walked up to them and said—where you going, kid. The girls tittered and smiled and spoke archly.

The people were beginning to come out for the night. They walked back thru a gathering jam. Bill was all tuned; he had his fun being somebody by laughing at the others. Jim was seriously involved in his plans for a good party. He looked the girls over carefully, he hardly heard Bill's quips. Jack was still shy in the new atmosphere, requiring its careful attention to his hidden superiorities. Sitting on the bed each took a few shots of Scotch from the bottle. It was moonshine stuff and bit like hell. Jim tested it by lighting some with a match. When it flared, Jack laughed, thinking of the movie trick where the sloppy guy with mustaches spits it on the sidewalk to make it burn and explode. Jim was urging them to drink so that they might feel right and set for the dance that night, but the liquor burning up that way kind of put them off it. They finished about a third of the bottle. Every time Jim took a drink he grimaced, contorting his face horribly, cursing and swearing it was awful stuff. But he wanted to get drunk so badly, in order to carry out his plans, that he kept right on drinking. Bill and Jack rolled laughing on the bed and floor as he cursed and took another drink. He stopped when he realized they would need some for the girls after the dance.

There wasn't any hot water and only a little soap. They couldn't get very clean. Jack jumped upstairs to shave at the landlady's kitchen sink by the light of a kerosene lamp. He could hear Bill kidding, and Jim flattering, a bunch of girls who had just arrived. It was a quick get-together. Jim was an arranger, fixed the girls for dances that night, dated them up for after the dance, the idea being

that they'd be sure of something. They were going to have one glorious fine time in forgetting their habits of conduct. The girls fussed, kidded, and fooled around for some time. Bill razzed the poor dears badly, they seemed to like it.

The dance hall projected out into the sea on a footwork of piles. Music from it sounded distance-soft thru all the beach. Jack rushed the other two along to get to it. It was packed, being the only amusement the young liked. Sexes were evenly present, no wall-flowers. All this uproar and hubbub made a good democratic condition. Boys and girls had come from different towns, were mostly unacquainted, and were able only to use their eyes and hands and ears to select partners. This was a free hunting ground, a red hot band started them off to hunt.

The boys separated when they got in, foraging each alone. Jack shot off a line about shows, actresses, and scandal to the partners he talked to. This got the frailer, uncertain ones, tough ones thot him upstage, and recognized an alien. Bill was proficient, he hopped right on them and drove them under his will, making them feel inferior, always wanting to fight. If they didn't talk he'd say—don't you ever say anything or are you just naturally dumb. Their defensive tactics became part of his offense. They had to prove *they* were good enough for him. Jim was kind of sentimental, as befitting the consummation of his plans, he talked flattery to them, asked loads of personal intimate questions. Many of them liked him, he was nice kind-looking and he talked on their ground about things they knew about and had opinions on. He was always practical, knowing the prominent streets and buildings of their town, and other informational items they thot impersonal and important. These were what they knew about, they forgot their scares.

Jim was attached to, and shared with these girls; they were going his way. Bill and Jack wanted their girls rebellious. They had been shaken loose from the things the people they knew best held onto; and they wanted to hold hands. A girl full of hates was the one who might jump to them in a moment of being together. They looked for the bright slim girls who were pretty and poor; they'd be nice to kiss, and they wouldn't know enough other girls to have

picked up their defences. These would be the kind of girl who went to the movies to dream on Lilian Gish dying in the Limehouse. Only a lucky break could run them into a girl like this. Bill got sore after a while, he stood alone in a corner cursing stupidity and rats ants dagoes wops hunks dopes conies. Jack fastened onto one he could talk to grandiosely and cute. Her eyes shone when he talked sedately in college english about scandalous topics like girls not wearing petticoats and the intricacies of her wardrobe. Some of her boy friends looked leanly at this gink who kept on talking his feminine-persuading. She didn't believe him but it was good music, she didn't miss a gesture dear boy. It was pouring hot while dancing, all the boys had their shirts open at the collar. Jim found Jack and dragged him away. The dance was ending, Jim wanted the evening wild, and was concerned only with finding three together. Bill was willing to join a party but wouldn't budge from his corner to go look. He and Jim got into a hot argument over this. Jack took two rebuffs while it went on. When they finished the dance was disbanding, all the good ones attached, many of the bimbs so snotty and selective that they ended by taking their sure thing—the girls from the house—back to the house.

They sat on the porch outside their big room, the girls in their laps. Jim right away started mugging hell out of his. He knew what he wanted and had come for, he sought it. Jack was tired, he sang in a pale pretty voice—You were meant for me and I was meant for you—thinking of Gertrude Lawrence's stunning legs, rocking the chair not minding the oppressive and compressive female so dispassionate. Soon he got up and walked along the watersedge, watching black marching fronts. It was softly quiet with only the waves noising in. Oh, angel, there must be something. Bill could be heard silencing objections to his onslaught. His gal wasn't so bad and he was trying to put the best in her. Jim managed to slip his girl inside their big room, but he wasn't able to get anything but a promise. They were all as glad when the girls left, for bed.

Jack was subdued. He laid out, pretending to sleep as Bill came looking for his aid in more parties. Bill and Jim

went off without him. They couldn't find any girls. But they found a house where everybody was tight. What a racket. From the telling of secret souls and sins. The girls were forgetting to remember, they threw their arms about their fellows. Bill and Jim couldn't get a foothold; when they tired of looking, they went home, taking along Johnnie Rodman whom they found without a home.

Jack was the first awake, tired and aching from the bulging springs. It was early. Bill and Jim were sleeping soundly beside him. Johnnie Rodman was on the cot. Johnnie's cot had been cushioned by a long rubber mat taken from the floor, and he looked comfortable. Bill and Jim had the carpets underneath them. Some feminines started gabbing while making breakfast in the kitchen on the other side of the partition. Jim and Bill awoke. Jim said "What the hell are those goddamned women doing at this time of the morning"—and rolled over trying to sleep. Bill laughed like hell in a long cackle, Jack joined to be a good fellow. Jim got sore and swore and called them idiots. Bill kept on cackling whenever the women said anything and called them all the dirty names he knew. When Johnnie awoke he led the fun. He couldn't keep his blanket over his shins. No one wanted to get up, no one wanted to sleep, they sat and rolled around waiting for something to happen. Jim half-wanted to sleep, he growled and grumbled till the horse-play started and turned on him. Beds were demolished and the boys, angular in b.v.d's, got all bumped up on the floor. "Goddamn it, hooray, let's go to church."

They washed, but they had no change of clothes, so they felt lowdown scrummy walking out to church. Church was jammed, people were kneeling in the streets. They watched the kneelers while they ate at a lunchstand. Bill hunted for a soft spot to sleep on, Jack and Jim went swimming till noon. The water looked and felt dirty, tasted dirt-salty, filled as it was with the great unwashed. Jim walked along the beach, making dates with the girls.

After lunch they toured looking for their girl friends. Jim was the driving force; he alone was avid of women, animal in not discriminating among the insides of skirts. Bill was tired, his old girls had exhausted his capabilities in their

direction. Jack didn't know what he wanted but he couldn't believe it could be here in front of him. It amounted to the same action in all of them, they did what the situation asked them to do. Johnnie was a happy fellow who enjoyed doing everything he did. They landed in a cottage where Johnnie sang popular ballads while playing the piano; he had a good voice which was employed in all the local minstrels. Jim kept the party excited, singing at the piano, trying to organize a quartet, kidding the girls, passing the conversation about to include everybody. Bill and Jack refused the gambit, joked together, and passed insults intended to be heard—oh, how bored they were. Some wearied guy was there, pretending not to notice them, attending his own girl, keeping out of their little party. This made Bill sore because the guy looked like a factory hand shined for the week-end, out of his class. He wanted to sock the bugger, and Jack pulled his head in out of the window where he was flirting with the air to tell him to sit down. Johnnie and Jack got to the icebox and drank all the ginger ale. There was a turmoil and Jack and Bill scooted—heading for a snooze in a hammock somewhere.

Jim and Johnnie stayed long enough to drag two of the girls to the house where Jim committed the treachery of bringing out the remainder of the Scotch. The girls guzzled it without noticeable effect. Bill and Jack came back, no girls, no hammock, no snooze. They snooped around and found their last night's playmates. They took kodaks, and fought manfully with these energetic tomboys till supper time. Johnnie had a date and left, taking the girls with him.

They joined the evening parade as soon as they had eaten. Trolley lines ran thru the center of the beach, and *everyone* promenaded on or beside them. It was a job finding three good women together; the three they got were only fairly attractive. On the way to the house Jim like a damn fool steered the party to a drug store for drinks even after Jack and Bill had gotten safely by it. Jim having expectations, a girl could do damn near anything with him.

Their records weren't old enough to be sour, and two of the girls were very good dancers. Bill and Jack did some tricky steps. At first dancing was on the porch but gradu-

ally moved inside the big room as it darkened. Jim had a small pert broad with a neat bright way, trim, straight legs, slim ankles, her dress girdled at the waist so that her round little buttocks were a bustle for it. The girl Bill had was heavy, with well formed large breasts, her legs beef, all of her hitting the ground. Her dress hung about her loosely, her face was full and dull, flaccid, placid, not awake. Jack had the real dopey one. She seemed best bet on first sight, so rangy and long, not skimped in any part, movements very free and graceful, features clean but not lit, too vapid. She talked nasally, but not often. She looked . . . good . . . and when he kissed her—in the dark—was very responsive, tho peculiar; she was excited but permitted no advances.

For a time Jack feared the landlady's interference. She sat on the porch and could hear everything. Jim and Bill knew she expected this and calmed him. Jim and Bill soon had their girls on the couch and were doing all they could with vehemence and some dispatch. After Jack had struggled unsuccessfully and to the limit of his capacity, he turned his girl over to Jim who was sure the fault was in Jack. Jim's girl was even less evocative, and Bill and Jack coupled activity on Bill's. They had loads of fun saying "here, take her, I'm tired." But this cruelty did not arouse her and they tired of passing her back and forth.

She had some use as a pillow when they tried to sleep. She didn't understand these bright boys, apparently so nice educated, classy, yet so vulgar, so direct and forthright. There were no insults in their conversation for her because she didn't know what they were talking about. She liked Bill because he dominated her. This helped her to believe their outright nasty talk about her relationships with boys was involved normal kidding. Jack liked her momentarily because she was *removed*—their attack shattered on her solidity. Bill saw in a cleaner way and had no emotions involving her. Why feel sorry. None of them *gave* anything. Their defences tightened because of the vigor of the boys' offense. None did anything out of herself to meet the events.

"For Christ's sake, Jim, get thru with that bimb and let's go." Jim was a never-say-die, working and working

to solve this peculiarity of feminine excitation. He stalled and stalled hoping to get to her. He proposed buying liquor but no place was open. Bill and Jack felt relieved by this turn because Jim had no money and they had very little. Even when they were walking the girls home Jim was talking to persuade her.

They had hamburger sandwiches at a stand. Bill was expansive, walking along making quips, listening to Jack very emotional this two a.m. about the first movement of the *Pathétique* opus, opus, opus, as he said. Jack whistled to imitate an entire symphony orchestra and Jim showed his sympathy for art, culture, the full life, and higher things by plangent applause. Bill liked it more when Jack whistled the same themes sour.

O, the marvel and colour, Bill, as 110 musicians, you know. Just to see them moving the bows and the whole platform a seething swishing. It's too much for me. You should hear *Petroushka*, an enormous let-up of the entire musical tradition.

Bill's girl liked Jack's impressing her with this grand musical enthusiasm. Bill listened to be transferred. The street stood very still in a slow hush; they walked into a vortex.

The pert one went right inside; Bill and Jack were amusing themselves with Bill's girl while waiting for Jim who had renewed attack on the other one. They told her all the dirty jokes they knew; she told them that she heard better ones at any gathering of girls. But she was surely no vicious female the jokes went by her and thru her and escaped her.

This pastime consumed two hours, and at the end of their supply they walked home, leaving Jim to his hot ways. Bill said—When Jim gets in going, you can't get him off the trail. Imagine him not knowing there's nothing doing with that wench. Poor fish, he'll get here to-night all worn out and nothing gained.

We had some fun talking to Rosa, your erstwhile divinity—Jack said—if we did get into what couldn't finish us. So ends the pursuit of the rainbow, and our shining dreams, two tough guys tired and sentimental in the quiet dark.

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

FROM: A FOLDED SKYSCRAPER

1.

Hemmed in males—hemmed in males—hemmed in males

The saloon is gone up the creek
with the black sand round its
mouth, it went floating like

a backhouse on the Mississippi in
flood time but it went up
the creek into Limbo from whence

only empty bottles ever return
And that's where George is
He's gone up stream, to ask 'em

to let him in at the hole
in the wall where the W.C.T.U.
sits knitting elastic stockings

for varicose veins. Poor George
he's got a job now as janitor
in Lincoln School but the saloon

is gone forever with pictures
of Sullivan and Kilrain on
the walls and Pop Anson holding

a bat. Poor George they've cut
out his pituitary gland and his
vas deferens is in the spittoon—

You can laugh at him without his
organs but that's the way with
a river when it wants to

drown you, it sucks you in and
you feel the old saloon sinking
under you and you say goodbye

just as George did, goodbye poetry
the black sand's got me, the old
days are over, there's no place

anymore for me to go now
except home.

2.

When I think how my grandmother flirted with me I often wonder why I have not been attracted by women of her type. SHE was a devil if there ever was one. When she'd move into a neighborhood she'd go out and clean it up, tongue wise. She'd lay 'em out, male and female—and then sit back in peace to her mysterious memories and awkward aspirations toward heaven and the hold she'd have still on the world and its accessories. She buried the keg of elderberry wine under the side of the house, and the stuff she'd eat, not to waste it, would make you shudder. This was especially after she'd gone nearly blind and had taken up Christian Science so that you couldn't trust her. Boy, them was the days. And the rags she'd use to wipe the dishes on when she'd have the family up to a meal in her shack on the shore over the Fourth. Baby, I can still see Pop wiping his knife on the edge of the tablecloth—or something, before he'd use it. But talk was her best weapon, she could lay you an argument like a steel fence and you might try to get through it for a day or a week or till doomsday and there she'd be still back of it laughing at you. The only fault she confessed to was a lack of self-assertion. She was right too. She liked no society, no gadding—except on some wild pretext, such as a fascination with the bicycle at sixty. She fell flat with the handle in one eye, but she did it, bloomers and all. Yet she—The city stifled her, she could not wait for the spring. School or no school (they suffered for it later) out she

would yank the two grandkids and off she'd track it for the shore, April to snowfall there she'd make her stand. Nobody could budge her, not even old man Nolan who had his wife eating out of his hand, big and burly as she was. He never got the best of Emily. That was it, she had it. She wanted to be out, away, alone, in the air, by the sea, breathing it in. She'd lie in the water's edge every summer's day till she was eighty. Sometimes she'd be so weak, all alone there, she couldn't get up with her wet rags dragging on her. She'd turn blue with the effort to lift herself on her hands and knees, laughing self consciously the while but doing it, doing it— She'd envy the birds the cherries they'd eat, or she'd sit and watch them playing and go get crumbs to throw them, or half scrape a fish the boys would be too lazy to clean, disgusted with its smallness— Lord what a bed she'd sleep in! It would carry you away with what it had in it. When she'd come to kiss you, you'd want to but you'd go easy and there'd be a good smell out of her scalp and up her neck— She liked me, I'd stand up and fight her by the day trying to get her to have clean dish rags or whatever it would be—some moral issue. All she wanted was to be alone and to have her quiet way. She had it. And love. She wanted that, hot foot into the grave, you couldn't get her without it. Took my father up to the cemetery the night before he married and made him promise her things over the grave of his dead sister. God pardon her for it.

3. THE WINDS

many winds, flowing edge to edge
their clear edges meeting—
as thought meets thought
in pity and contention
—the winds of this northern March

blow the bark from the trees
the soil from the fields
the hair from the heads of

girls, the shirts from the backs
of the men, roofs from the
houses, the cross from the
church, the clouds from the sky
the fur from the faces of
wild animals, crusts
from scabby eyes, scales from
the mind and husbands from wives

4.

In my uncivilized, amputated country thinking (I exist in a matrix of confusion) tobacco fed, looking for the number on a house down by Guinea Hill, thinking of Horace's (Quintus Horatius Flaccus) dictum: No wine, no poetry; undrunk no poetry—drunk in the caboose of my coupe, looking out dizzy from the smoke—thinking of poetry—just before the lights came out on the wires and pulleys and the poles, like cactus flowers (in a desert) as I often have the habit of thinking—thinking of Ezra Pound, our greatest and rightest poet, how excellent he is in his self-deception—opposed with a laugh to my fervent, my fierce, anger to have a country—speaking of his work, deriding me, saying that in the end his artificial pearl will be longer to last than anything I have made with all my striving—writing the greatest American poems today, his pearl-like cantos, so purely American—his self-deception, thinking how right he is in his self-deception that he had found poetry in the *quattro cento* in Dante, in them all of those old countries—when as a fact he had found poetry—how right he is a United States poet—when he thinks he has found poetry in the Renaissance, in his self-deception—for he HAS found poetry, an artificial pearly *Pound*, exile,—he has welded his material, he has what he has discovered, he has taken what there at least is—driven from my country that I strive so wildly to possess, he has taken the false, the make shift—the thing that they here—made him take—not the thing I want, but the thing I want.—It is poetry, it is United States poetry—but he is deceived in thinking the mediaeval is the

poetry, *he* is the making of the poetry, it is artificial pearly poetry because it is driven from being MY poetry—still I am right and still he is righter than I and still what I see exists and still he is right in doing poetry out of what is left—and still he is self-deceived—thinking of these things. And while I was thinking all this I seen this gink come running down the hill, on the concrete like a Marathon runner at the first mile, arunning by the front of my coupe without looking right nor left, in his cap, and went in at the horse entry of a lot with a kind of fence in front of it where there was a scrubby stick of a young wild cherry tree all growin' in among the boards—holdin' it up growin' from a pit a bird had —— there when the fence was first built—and kept on running down the kind of a dirt road down the middle of the lot where there was only one half the gate made of slats about as high as a man and a couple of trees back in it, a sort of store-lot for a contractor, it looked like, with a lot of things laying around, half rusty on the white grass there was there and a lot of dried weeds sticking in the bottom of the fence, and there was a heap of cobble stones on one side of the road heaped up with gutter slabs like they used to use before they began to put 'em in of concrete—he ran right down this here road back toward a house way at the back of the lot that had a two-story shed in front of it so's a steam shovel could get under it, and there was a ladder up to the top window, and an old junk of a shovel-truck was out in front of the house with a horse shoe tacked over the step. He kept right on hopping it past the house and beyond it—so I was dizzy with the tobacco smoke inside the coupe and I turned the car around,—well this guy that I'm telling you about had went running down that driveway and me sitting there in my coupe with my cigar in one hand half dizzy with the smoke not knowing which way I was going looking for the number and getting ready to turn my bus around there—right on down into this here contractor's lot with a heap of old ashes on one side. Down beyond the two-story shed you could see an old concrete mixer—and right near the slat fence there was a pile of logs about ten feet long and about a foot and a half thick, a lot of junk like that all the

way back on both sides the road with a stack of old boards, a post that had been painted red and with a hawser hole in the top stuck in the ground on one side— Well he kept right on running, hopping it along down the ruts under the shed, as I'm telling you, and went on through, past the two trees and everything, a whole row of dumpcarts standing there with the tail boards let down like a two year old's diapers hanging round the knees standing there with the poleshaft stuck in the ground, rusty looking, and there was a kind of rusty boiler like, leaning on a pile of junk back there, an awful heap of stuff in that lot and you could see there was a lot more junk back of the house, you could see it by the concrete mixer I was telling you about.

EDMUND WILSON

GALAHAD

IT had just been brought home to Hart Foster that he was probably certain of being elected to next year's presidency of the Y. M. C. A. of St. Matthew's School. The officers were always members of the Sixth Form, but when the Sixth Form secretary had been obliged to leave school, as the result of a mysterious nervous breakdown, Hart, who was still only a Fifth Former, had been asked to take his place. To-night, before dinner, when he had mentioned to his roommate that Boards Borden, the Sixth Form president, had invited him to visit him during the holidays, Eddie O'Brien had observed, as if with a chill of alienation: "Well, we'll all have to reform next year when you're president of the Y!" Hart had noted the change of tone, which already implied both the gulf between the layman and the consecrated priest and the inequality between the commoner and the heir to some position of prestige, and it had worried and distressed him. As he had dressed for the evening meeting, plastering his hair down glossily on each side, stretching his watch-chain with Y. M. C. A. tautness between the two lower pockets of the vest of his immaculate blue suit, he confronted the situation for the first time. The Fifth Form was notoriously below standard in moral character: three Fifth Formers had recently been suspended for a nocturnal escapade to Boston and almost a whole floor of the Fifth Form Flat had been deprived of their privileges—from going into town on Saturday to visiting after evening study hour—for smoking in their rooms. The only other member of the Fifth Form who had been as active in the Y as Hart had a stutter which would make it impossible for him to preside at the weekly meetings without exciting the derision of the audience. But Hart wondered whether he were really prepared to assume the responsibility of the Y. He would enjoy the position of importance, but he doubted

whether he possessed the qualifications for it. He would, he felt, make a good executive; and, from some points of view, a good speaker. But he was far better as a debater than as an inspirational orator: he felt more confident of his ability to achieve distinction in the big inter-school debate. When his room-mate had spoken with that edge of grimness, Hart had felt a little like a hypocrite. Did being president of the Y. M. C. A. mean denying the jovial rough-house, the nonsense and bawdy jokes, of the Fifth Form Flat? Did it mean becoming like Boards Borden? His own temperament was severer and more restrained than that of most of his companions, but he thoroughly enjoyed their society and shrank from the prospect of being isolated from them. One of the great sports of the hour before lights-out when life so rapidly became heightened and riotous, as soldiers soon to return to the front make the most of their last hours of leave, was putting people under the bed. Could he continue to participate in such diversions if he were president of the Y. M. C. A.? Yes, he told himself, he certainly should: he would show them that he was still a good fellow. But would his presence discourage their fun? Would they feel at liberty to put *him* under the bed? And would it be right for them to do so? Yet, without equality of privilege, the game would be spoiled: the situation would become impossible. He wondered whether he really lacked faith: he was certainly capable of earnest moral enthusiasm, but he had noticed that, though he had prayed with the best masters, he had never seemed to catch their exaltation and that Holman Hunt's *Light of the World*, which was hung behind the platform in the Study Hall, had obstinately remained for him a closed and beaconless symbol which never flashed its revelation.

To-night, therefore, at this most important of all meetings, the last before the Christmas holidays, as he sat behind his desk on the platform, watching the gradual filling of the room and making accurate businesslike gestures in connection with the minute-book before him—his glowing cleanness, but lately issued from the shower, gilded richer by the powerful droplight which illuminated his desk—he felt

a sort of self-consciousness and, as it were, an imperfect harmony with the ritual in which he was officiating, such as, before his final realization that the mark of his call was upon him, had rarely caused him embarrassment. Where he had hitherto been able to enjoy the sensations that were the accompaniment of presiding at a Y meeting, the deeply gratifying sensations of pure and well-washed consecration, of competent noble maturity, which, though still on terms of admirable good-fellowship with the juvenile student body, bears the seal of having passed from among them to receive the Tables from Sinai, and smiles down upon them now for the moment with the cordiality, a little too ready, of the heroic Christian leader who is but the servant of all—though he had hitherto enjoyed these sensations, he seemed this evening to have partially lost contact with them. He tended to scrutinize, to reflect and even, within himself, to judge.

The meeting had been well advertised and the attendance was particularly good. In his belief that the Christmas holidays were a period of peculiar temptations, Mr. Hotchkiss, the patron saint of school and college Y. M. C. A.'s, who kept them all under supervision and was usually present on occasions of importance, had especially provided to speak on Vice, a professional reformed debauchee; and perhaps a third of the school had turned out in the eager, if apprehensive, hope of being regaled with some of the details of his abominable life. They swarmed along the rows of seats, with flurries of restrained rioting, in the hard electric light and the plain woodwork setting of the Study Hall; and, above them, in a plaster garland, were ranged the busts of the great men of antiquity—of Homer and Socrates and Plato, of Thucydides and Euripides, of Seneca and Virgil and Augustus.

Boards Borden at last rang the bell and called the meeting to order.

He was a tall square-shouldered youth, blond, handsome and without distinction, whose white collar stood so high that his neck seemed encased in a pipe and whose watch-chain and plastered hair followed the same formula as those of Hart. As he stood up to open the meeting, a vast solemnity

paralyzed the audience—as if the barren robustness of his spirit had had the effect of striking even emptier that great bare box of a room, as if the crude steady light of his zeal had been able to render even harsher that unshaded electric glare. It was apparently not merely his last name, but something in his appearance and character, which had earned him the nickname of Boards.

First, Onward Christian Soldiers was sung with a certain amount of gusto and then the president offered up a short prayer requesting divine support during the holidays. After this, Hart read the minutes of the last meeting with distinctness and gravity.

Then Boards Borden stood up again and haltingly addressed the assembly. Hart reflected that, though he himself might perhaps lack inspiration, he would at least, in Board's place, speak more coherently.

"Fellows, we have to talk to us to-night both Mr. Hotchkiss and Mr. Bergen. Mr. Hotchkiss hardly needs an introduction among St. Matthew's fellows. His work among the schools and colleges is—well known throughout the country—and especially at St. Matthew's—as is also his work in connection with China—with the missionary work in China.—And I want to say, by the way, in regard to this work, that the response we've been getting has been pretty disappointing. Now, fellows, we're pretty lucky! We have about everything we want. And it seems to me that we ought to be able to spare a little to help this work along. It seems to me that each of us ought to be able to spare something—for this work in China. The first meeting after the holidays is going to be especially devoted to the work in China and I hope that we'll make a better showing than we have so far.—Mr. Hotchkiss will now speak to us, fellows."

Mr. Hotchkiss arose and came behind the lectern. He was a big broad-shouldered man with a florid solemn face and the sonorous fluent voice of the habitual orator.

"Fellows," began Mr. Hotchkiss, "there are certain things that I want especially to speak to you about to-night. Next week, you are all going home for your Christmas holidays.

You are all very eager to get away from the restraints of school and to see your dear ones at home and to have a chance to play. Now that instinct to get away and play is a perfectly healthy and normal one. You have all heard the old saying: 'All work and no play makes Jack a dull Boy.' Well, that is perfectly true. Without the right amount of play—and *the right sort of play*—we should not be able to do our work or to be of service to God. Play then, for all you are worth! Play to your heart's content. Go to the theatre; go to dances; go sleighriding; go skating. Enjoy yourselves in every clean manly sport that the town or the country provides. But be sure that the amusements which you choose *are* clean and manly and wholesome. There will be other kinds of amusements that will not be so clean and not be so wholesome; and you will perhaps be tempted to indulge in them because you are no longer at school and because there is no one there to watch over you. In the carelessness and gaiety of the holidays you will perhaps be tempted to forget yourselves; you will be tempted to drink a cocktail or to go with a loose woman; you will be tempted to abuse your body and your soul—perhaps to ruin them for ever—all for a moment of so-called pleasure. I believe that the Christmas vacation—which will begin for you next Wednesday—is the most dangerous period of the whole year!"

The boys, who, for the most part, had found vacation a harmless, though agreeable, experience, asked themselves how they had ever overlooked the peculiar snares with which it appeared to abound. It was no doubt by reason of their youth that they had so far managed to escape them; but they told themselves now that in the future they would be on the look-out for them. The younger and more timid boys were a little frightened by the news; it seemed to put such an ugly mask on the dear holidays, which had hitherto smiled from afar to them, with the joyousness of freedom and the kindness of their homes.

"Now," continued Mr. Hotchkiss, "I want to take these temptations up one by one. I want to show you that, far from bringing happiness, they can bring nothing but degra-

dation. First, let me say a word about gambling: now, gambling has always seemed to me the most foolish of all the vices: if you win the other man's money, you are taking money that doesn't belong to you, that you have no right to keep: if you lose, why then you lose, and you're poorer than you were before." (The audience, enslaved by his spell, were heard to give an abject giggle.) "I cannot conceive how a rational man can be willing to waste his time and his money in gambling!"

He proceeded to the other vices—smoking, drinking and swearing were all discredited—and at last he arrived at the culminating vice of which they had all been waiting to hear.

"And finally," he began, "there is the most dangerous of all temptations—the temptation from which perhaps none of us is free. I mean the temptation which has its basis in the sexual instinct."

At these words, the whole room became perfectly still: not a coatsleeve was heard to rustle; scarcely even a breath was drawn.

"Fellows," proceeded Mr. Hotchkiss in his ponderous droning voice, like some flat and monotonous organ that swelled now to a fuller strain with the speaker's mounting emotion, "I'm not going to handle this subject with gloves on! I'm not going to handle this subject evasively! I believe in calling things by their right names; and I believe in telling the facts! But before I do anything else, I'm going to show you two photographs." He came to the front of the rostrum and handed them down to the audience. "They are two pictures of the same girl—the first one taken when she was living decently, earning an honest living in a soap factory, and the other taken after she had fallen and had been practising for a number of years *the trade of a woman of the streets*. You wouldn't know it was the same person, would you? Slovenly, degraded, diseased!

"Fellows! suppose someone came to you and said: 'It was you who did this thing! It was you who changed this decent and happy girl, with the whole of life before her, with the hope of a respectable marriage and the sacred joys

of motherhood—it was you who changed this decent girl into this miserable degraded creature, dying of poverty and disease!’ You might laugh at the person who told you this. You might think it was impossible. You might think it was impossible for you, for you a St. Matthew’s fellow, to have had anything whatever to do with such a hideous tragedy. But somewhere, fellows, somewhere that girl *took the first false step*.” (Here his voice began to grow lachrymose, as it always did at the climax of his sermons: he had acquired, among the irreverent, the nickname of Weeping Fred.) “Perhaps some evil-minded fellow—or perhaps only some careless fellow—because carelessness is the cause of as much evil in the world as wickedness—perhaps some careless young man offered her marriage and then took advantage of her faith; or she may have been tempted into drinking too much and may have made her first fatal error when she didn’t know what she was doing; or she may have craved luxury and fine clothes and become the mistress of some wealthy man, who cast her aside as soon as he was tired of her. But it wasn’t you, you say. How do you know it wasn’t you? You go into a bar or café, let us say, where there is a young girl serving drinks. She allows the men to talk with her familiarly as she waits upon them. All day she is obliged to listen to the profanity and the filthy talk of the men in the bar or the café. One day some drunken fool puts his arm about her waist—perhaps he tries to kiss her. It may even be you who do this; you may forget that she is a woman; you may forget St. Matthew’s School and all that it has meant when you were here; you may think that because she talks slangily, because she has never been educated like you, that she is any the less worthy of respect than your own sister or your own mother. You may ask her to go out with you; you may invite her to go to the theatre. For a girl in her position, that will be a temptation hard to resist. She may allow you to flirt with her and you may take advantage of her folly. Now think, fellows!—think a moment!—what you could do to that girl!”

His appeal thundered out over the room with lugubrious vibrations and the audience sat stunned and gaping, petri-

fied before the abyss. It had never before occurred to most of them to think what they could do to that girl. Even Hart, who, in his present mood, had tended at first to sit through this classical set-piece with the composure of a conjuror's assistant looking on at a levitation act, found himself both stimulated and scared by this imaginary seduction. But the description of venereal disease which followed quickly disinfected his imaginings.

When Mr. Hotchkiss finally sat down, with a tear in either tragic eye, and Boards Borden stood up again to announce Mr. Bergen as the next speaker, there was a shuffling of frozen feet and a clearing of phlegmy throats, and a rustle of moistened lips and relieved respiration. They looked up at the figure before them with excitement and awe.

He was a bloated red-faced man with a wild alcoholic eye, who had assumed the youthful blue suit and the white zinc-cylinder collar of the Y.M.C.A. But not even that rigid uniform—nor the gold chain across his bulging paunch—not even his fierce glaring dignity could restore integrity to his countenance, which had spoiled like an old pumpkin lantern that a child has left to rot. He carried with him a pile of papers.

"Before I start to talk," he began, in a loud raucous voice, "I just want to show you boys a few pictures and tell you a few facts. You can draw your own conclusions from them!—Now here's a picture of a man that you've all heard about!" He held up a photograph which nobody could see. "Quarter-back on the Yale eleven! The best all-around athlete of his time! As fine a fellow as you could wish to see! And where is he now? Where is that fine young fellow now? Boys, that young fellow is in jail!—in jail for forging his father's name to a check for five thousand dollars!—Here's Jack Sheldon—I don't want to tell you their real names—here's Jack Sheldon—the most brilliant man at Harvard—Captain of the Debating Team and President of the Dickie.—Duh yuh know where he is now? Duh yuh know where Jack Sheldon is now? Jack Sheldon is in the insane asylum, with a loathsome social disease!—Here's Bill Davis, the half-mile runner! You've all heard of Bill Davis

—a man who was famous for years in intercollegiate sports—voted the most popular man in his class! Boys, here's a telegram I received from Bill Davis's father, begging me to come quick for God's sake—see, it says, 'Bergen, come quick, for God's sake, because Bill is in Roosevelt Hospital with a fractured skull where he was hit on the head in a drunken brawl and found unconscious in the street!'

"Now that's just to show you what vice can do to a man, when he hasn't got Christ in his heart! A man may be the greatest athlete in the world or the brainiest student in the world, but if he hasn't got faith in Christ, temptation will dragum in the mire.—I see them all at Fantoni's and Charlie's! I know which of yuh go there!—And duh yuh know where I was once? Duh yuh know where Bergen was once? Boys: Bergen was down! Bergen was down in the depths! You could see him coming out of a low saloon over on 4th Avenue, with a hiccough on his lips, with bleary eyes and a sodden face, begging the passers-by for a nickel to buy him another drink! Boys: *is Salvation real?*—When my father heard the life I was living, it almost broke his heart. He sat down in his office one day—the fine old Southern gentleman!—and he took out his will from his desk and he crossed out his son's name from it and he broke down and wept because Bergen was a prodigal and a bum! I'd wasted his money in the saloons and the low dives of New York. Some nights I hardly knew my own name! You couldn'ta told me from the tramps and the bums that you see laying around in the street. Oh, Bergen's been in the depths, boys! —*Is Salvation real?*"

He proceeded to disquieting details of his life in the underworld. The boys' hands sweated in their pockets or clasped the arms of their seats. At last, he staggered into the mission and was miraculously redeemed.

"Well, one day my picture appeared on the front page of a New York paper and when my father saw that picture he took the train straight up to New York and he came to see me at my hotel. I put on a silk-hat and a frock-coat—yes, Bergen put on a frock-coat!—and I walked right down into the lobby of one of the swellest New York hotels. And

when my father saw me there, when my father saw me dressed like that, he threw his arms around my neck, and he said, 'My boy! my boy! My God! forgive me!'—*Is Salvation real?*

"Now, I'll be in Mr. Clarkson's office," he concluded, "to-night and to-morrow morning. If any boy wants to ask me any questions or talk over any of his problems with me, I'll be glad to have him come and see me. I've helped hundreds of young men who were struggling with secret sins and temptations."

He sat down amidst deathly silence and the President arose.

"Do you want to say anything more, Mr. Hotchkiss?" he inquired.

"Only this," said Mr. Hotchkiss smiling, "A merry Christmas to you all!"

"We will close the meeting," continued Boards, "with as many short prayers as possible and afterwards the singing of Hymn Number 508."

The audience collapsed into attitudes of prayer and the President started them off with a dull and correct invocation which bore witness to long practice. Then there was a strange vacant moment of shyness, broken at last by several voices which all tried to begin at once and then pulled themselves up in a panic; then two voices were heard to begin and again strike a deadlock of silence—till, at last, one of them, bolder than the other, persisted and prayed him down. But when he had finished, little jets of prayer, lifted sometimes in plaintive trebles, were heard rising one by one. Thus they had been taught to feel the stirring of the Spirit. When the President, peeking at his watch, decided that they had prayed enough, he cut them short with a prayer of his own, like a wooden plug in a leak: and the audience, blinking, frightened and moved, found their places in the hymn-book self-consciously, so solemn that they did not know what to say nor how to look at one another.

And Hart, as he watched them disperse, felt stiffened and sterilized. True, there was something about Bergen which he had not liked, which had affected him unpleasantly at

first, which had embarrassed him as he had been embarrassed by the billowing breath of a saloon belched obscenely across his path when he had been walking with a lady. But Bergen certainly did make vice seem poisonous—though perhaps poisonous and alluring at the same time, a crapulous and fascinating power. As he had listened, he had lost his detachment: gambling and drinking meant nothing to him, but erotic day-dreams he had to confess and, as Bergen talked, he had felt a sort of dizziness, a vertigo at the edge of the abyss, a perverse desire to plunge down, to succumb to its iridescent waters. But that lasted only a moment: Mr. Hotchkiss had disinfected him. Yes: the Y.M.C.A. was right! It stood for clean thoughts and clean living; and clean living was the only way! He told himself that now for ever he must be master of the sinister lapses of his imagination: no longer would he look through the cheap magazines for the buxom breasts and legs of actresses; no longer should a line from Virgil set him chasing white nymphs in a wood. He remembered the bawdy little boy who had once told dirty stories, who had ransacked his uncle's library for a copy of *The Decameron*; and he felt nothing but hatred and contempt for the creature he had once been.

Yes: he knew now that there were only two courses in dealing with one's sexual desires: one way was to sink and to drown in the morass—prostitution, syphilis, shame; and the other was to accept the revelation handed down by the Y.M.C.A.: to remain clinically ascetic and pure. It was a sort of scientific idealism, a mixture of pathology and holiness. It was as if his soul had become a member of some chivalrous religious order, a combination of the Round Table and a Trappist monastery, in which the brothers wore the white robes of doctors when they work in contagious wards and washed their hands, as regularly as they prayed, in a solution of carbolic acid.—And he had been chosen for their High Priest. He had a thrill of consecration—yet he was frightened.

2.

Hart Foster had never visited the Bordens before and was astonished to see the scale on which they lived. For almost half an hour, the glossy limousine glided along among landscape-gardened lakes and groves and finally drew up at the door of a prodigious, an apparently limitless house, which lifted its vast white façade in the naked winter dusk. It was as if some simple Colonial cottage had been blown to enormous dimensions and its grace become stupid and gross, being swollen beyond man's measure. Hart had known that Boards's father had been rich but he had not realized how rich. Rather like a hotel, he reflected, as he gazed up at the tiers on tiers of windows.

Boards opened a shadowy door on an interior of warm rich light and they were saluted by a crash of barking, as if they had invaded a kennel. Hart found himself surrounded by dogs, most of them very large; a Great Dane, as big as a calf, nearly knocked him down. Boards ordered them to be still, but they only barked louder than ever and when he attempted to placate each in turn, the dogs that were being neglected had frenzies of jealousy. At last, a tall young girl rushed up and, with the ruthless roughness of a lion-tamer, succeeded in beating them down. Hart saw that there were, beside the Great Dane, two collies, a Russian wolf-hound, a spotted coach-dog and an Airedale.

"This is my sister," explained Boards. "Barbara, this is Mr. Foster."

"Hello!" said Barbara.

She was a handsome girl with fine brown eyes, wilful and superb, and a mass of brown hair in a heavy clot at the back of her head: she bulked strangely on Hart's gaze, almost with a physical impact. The smooth robust mask of her face, which smiled with conventional cordiality, seemed to shield some formidable power, which challenged him and asked him a question; she was charged with some magnetic current which might almost have galvanized him as he took her frankly given hand. In her presence, he suddenly became aware, not merely of his Christian man-

hood, but also of his smartly parted hair and his brown eyes expressing cordiality.

As they were trying to shake hands, one of the collies got in between them and jumped up on Barbara.

"Get down, you big clumsy boob!" she cried. "You'll ruin my dress!"

"What a lot of dogs you have!" said Hart.

"Yes," she answered, "they're all mine."

"The new Dupont has come," she said to Boards. "Let's go out in it after dinner. It's got a new kind of gear-shift." Hart watched her with an admiration not untempered by fear and disapproval. Though well-built and blonde like her brother, she was otherwise as different from him as possible: whereas Boards was conventional and stiff, moving slowly and speaking weightily, Barbara followed vigorous instincts with natural and rowdy movements, as imperious, yet as little formal, as a young barbarian queen. . . .

They had got into a curious room, a paradise of pink and gold, which suggested the ribbons and gilt cord of an expensive box of candy. It made Hart uneasy to see the dogs ranging about among the fragile furniture and jumping up with ruthless paws on the satin sofa cushions. The Airedale and the wolf-hound, on the couch, were barking out the window.

"The old Baxter stalled on me again yesterday," Barbara was saying. "It just fell dead in the ditch. I was so sick of getting the darned old thing fixed that I just went away and left it in the road. The man in the barber-shop at Greenwich came out and tried to fix the clutch and I told him he could have it, if it was any good to him."

"You should have sent somebody to get it," objected Boards, shocked by her wanton waste. "You oughtn't to throw away a perfectly good car like that. We could have given it to the McFadden Street Settlement House."

But here the Great Dane knocked over with his tail an enormous Japanese vase, which crashed like an egg-shell on the floor.

"Oh, my God!" exclaimed Barbara, "there goes something or other!—Now, look what you've done, Goofy!"

She gave him a terrific smack.

"Still," she reflected, "he never knows where his tail is going,—do you Goofy?" She patted him and put her arm around his neck. "Poor old Goofy," she said.

"Oh, Barbara!" cried a voice, "I've told you not to bring the dogs in here!"

Hart, who had been picking up the pieces, beheld a broad, rather handsome lady, who combined a majestic presence with an air of bewilderment and uncertainty. Her dark hair, parted in the middle, made two smooth low bands along her temples in a manner both becoming and plain.

"I'm sorry, Mother," protested Barbara, "but we were just going through this way. And besides, I never could see what this room was good for, anyway!"

Hart, looking about him in the lull that had followed the appearance of Mrs. Borden, saw a salon which somehow reminded him of the parlors of old-fashioned houses in small country towns. The scale was infinitely greater but the style was unmistakably the same. On the walls were portraits of the children, painted very badly, but with the air of young princes; a portrait of the late Mr. Borden, with the masterful brow of Barbara; a water-color of a group of blue-birds perched appealingly on a bough; and a great gilt-framed wall-placard with the legend "God is Love." On a little stand stood a silver model of the first Borden Motor Truck—Mr. Borden had made motor trucks—and on a pedestal an enormous bust of Barbara modelled at the age of twelve, with the blank white pupils of the eyes, the hair-ribbon and lace collar, all precisely reproduced in marble; on the table were books by Dr. Henry van Dyke and Mr. Raymond Fosdick and two richly bound volumes, with clasps, of a work called *Picturesque Florence*. Hart felt that the shades should be pulled down and the parlor with its treasures preserved in darkness. . . .

"That was the vase your father brought from Japan," said Mrs. Borden. "Oh, don't bother about picking them up," she stayed the helpful Hart.

"It must have been a beautiful vase," he said politely, holding up a flowery fragment.

"Well, we were very fond of it," she replied. "My husband brought it home from Japan. They make such beautiful things in Japan. It's all imitated from the Chinese, of course, but they make beautiful things. Have you ever been to Japan? . . . It's such a beautiful country. Of course, you don't think the women are beautiful, at first, but after a while you get used to them—the Japanese type of beauty. My husband never would admit that a Japanese woman could be beautiful, but I really learned to like them. And then their little feet seem so queer at first—as if they were deformed. We had the cunningest little Jap girl to wait on us at the hotel. . . ."

After dinner, which was eaten with simple manners amidst formidable surroundings, the new Dupont was tried out. Accompanied by the ineffectual admonishments and pleadings with which Mrs. Borden sought to restrain them, Hart, Boards and Barbara, all three wedged themselves into the front seat, and Barbara drove—drove at a terrific rate. Without slackening speed, she wrenched the car about the wooded curves with bold and magnificent gestures. There was an arrogance about her for Hart which disquieted him and compelled his admiration. She took life as if she were riding on top of it; she lifted them into a new world.

In the town, they stopped for a soda.

"I believe," Boards Borden advised Hart, as they imbibed strawberry syrup through straws, "I believe that you ought to do everything you can to reach Butts Bigelow and that bunch when they get back to school next fall." (Butts Bigelow had been the ringleader of the Fifth Formers who had been suspended for running away to Boston.) "They'll be Sixth Formers next year and I think it's a darn shame that the younger fellows should see Sixth Formers behave the way they do."

"I think Butts Bigelow is cute," said Barbara. "I danced with him once."

"I heard that Butts Bigelow was seen drunk in New York," contributed Hart.

"You don't mind my drinking your water, do you?" asked Barbara, smiling at him delightfully.

"No,—not at all," replied Hart, with a responsive smile which he somehow felt did violence to the spirit of the conversation.

"You heard that he was drunk," said Boards. "Well, there's more to that!"

"What?" asked Hart.

"I'll tell you sometime."

"Oh, tell now," demanded Barbara. "I won't tell anybody!"

Boards shook his head. "It wouldn't be fair to the man," he explained. "It might hurt him some day when he's trying to be decent. If a man has a bad reputation, very often he's unfairly handicapped later on when he wants to lead a clean life. Nobody will believe any good of him. I always make it a point not to tell anything I may know about the fellows."

"Oh, bull!" said Barbara. . . .

But when Barbara had gone to buy some flea-soap at the back of the store, Boards laid bare the shame of Butts Bigelow in a low grim voice, which almost made his companion's heart stop beating in his expectation of enormities. "Well, there's a place in New York called the Prince Edward Club, which is really nothing more than a brothel. And it seems the people who go there have to sign their names in a register. Well, Butts Bigelow has been seen in this place, and, you mustn't let it be known at school, but instead of signing his own name, he signed Dr. Durham's name!"

Hart gaped before it aghast; to make light of the Head Master was like blasphemy. And there was revealed to him, with a sinister fascination, behind a muffled ambiguous front, a narrow, electric-lighted room with a glittering bar at one side, where Butts Bigelow, entering with rakish aplomb and hideous sophistication, wrote sneeringly in a register and then went upstairs—to what?

"How do you know?" he faltered.

"Bergen saw him and told us."

"How can you reach a fellow like that?" Hart wondered in dismay.

"You must try to pray with him," said Boards.

Then Barbara returned and swept them off to the car.

"You drive going back, Boards," she commanded, "and Hart and I'll sit in back. It's too crowded three in front."

"Let's put this big robe over us," she said to Hart, as they got in. "It's cold as blazes to-night." And she wrapped them up close together in the middle of the seat.

As they cut through the winter night, mowing down the shadows with their headlights—beneath a cold high-riding moon that left the thickets of the roadside black—Hart, setting his face against the wind with his head thrown impressively back, felt the combined exhilaration of rapid movement, spiritual nobility and power, and the presence at his side of an exciting girl who was evidently disposed to like him. He saw himself reasoning with Butts Bigelow, saying, "It's not fair to the girl, Butts. It's not fair to the girl." How clean, how handsome, how firm, and withal how human he was! Butts thanked him and shook his hand—frank and wholesome, a fine fellow now. It nearly brought tears to Hart's eyes: he was a Helper, a Leader of Men!—And he turned an earnest and exalted face to the companion at his side.

When they were back at the house, eating apples in front of a large fire, Barbara protested against Boards's sober decision that it was time to go to bed. She insisted that Hart should stay up and play a game with her in the bowling-alley. But Hart, much in awe of his friend and invariably following Boards's lead, excused himself and went up.

When they did bowl the next afternoon, Barbara scored so heavily against Hart that, embarrassed, sweating and flushed, he was moved to muster all his skill and energy for a smashing succession of strikes. "You'd make a good bowler," said Barbara, "if you had a little practice." The close, sweaty, woody smell of the bowling-alley, which in the school gymnasium had always seemed stale and rather disagreeable, took on a rank and intoxicating savor from Barbara's moist face and bright eyes. The crash of the falling pins fed a nervous increasing excitement.

When that night they went again for a ride, he and she

sat behind all the way and Hart attempted to sing tenor to her songs, a refinement which did not seem to interest her. Once his hand, under the robe, was shifted against hers, as they rounded a curve, and he noticed that she did not draw her hand away, as he should have supposed a well-bred girl would do. Then he wondered why he did not draw his own away, and immediately did so. She began a song about Franky and Johnny which he had never heard before and he sat in stupid silence. Its rakish unfamiliar sound—like her reckless and arrogant driving—seemed again to mark a barrier between them. . . . Now her head was flung back in drunkenness; she was riding down the night with ribaldry. She glanced at him from under lowered eye-lids with gaiety and a challenge. It would be nice to kiss her, he thought. . . .

The next night, when he found her hand again lying on the seat against his, he failed to draw his own away and, after a moment, took hers—in a frank and friendly manner, as if it were a sister's. But her hand responded with something more than friendliness—with eagerness: it was a warm and desirous creature which welcomed him to its breast. He was filled with a deep satisfaction and a steadily sustained excitement. So they sat for several miles singing *My Yellow-Jacket Girl* and *'The Girl I Love Is on a Magazine-Cover*. For a moment, the Leader of Men was left in the thin outer air. He did not press her hand or caress it; he did not even look around at her, but only stared straight ahead. Presently she snatched her hand away and smoothed her blowing hair behind her ears.

Alone in his bed-room a little later, his satisfaction overflowed the bounds which had been preserved by a visit from neighbors and a very confused billiard match: it flooded the enormous room and became the element in which he swam. The high ceiling, the magenta curtains, the abundant purple-shaded lamps, the serviceable tables and bureaus set about at enormous distances and with nothing on them except a few of Hart's neckties and his military hair-brushes, seemed an appropriate setting for his soul—they reinforced a conviction of power, of moving through the great scenes of life. He looked nobly at himself in a great gilt-framed

oval mirror; then slicked his hair a little and looked at himself again. In the bathroom, of a candor like smooth glazed snow, he was humming *My Yellow-Jacket Girl* and *Who Follows in His Train*?

He was thinking of himself again now as a Master and Leader of Men, but with Barbara for a wife. He was thinking of the scene they should enact when he should tell her first of his love. He would say, "Barbara, I have loved you for a long time now. . . . Will you share my work with me?" . . . She was evidently a great woman, whose extraordinary energy and strength needed only to be shown the path, to be turned to the service of Christ. What a spiritual companion she would make! At the end of the busy day, when he came home utterly exhausted—exhausted, strong as he was—from his administrative duties and his speaking; and she from her settlement work, deeply moved by the condition of the poor; they would console and sustain one another, they would kneel down together and pray. . . .

He knelt now by his bedside alone and prayed to be made worthy of her—to be clean, to be wise, to be upright, to be a tower of strength to the weak. . . . Then he turned out the silk-shaded lights and opened a window by the bed. Below it lay the phantom grounds, like the floor of a tranquil lake—all brimmed full to-night by the moon with a limpid bluish-gray water, where the trees stood up like water-weeds and the grass seemed just to show green with a faint silver luminosity. He thought for a moment of Romance, of magic in German forests, of monstrous castles cracked asunder and black-armoured foemen beaten down, of a lady riding behind him on the back of a great white horse. . . . Then he snuffed out these childish fancies and got in between the fresh crisp sheets. From the window fell a shaft of moonlight which threw long silver panes on the floor.

He thought of the first time he should kiss her—on the cheek it would be, of course—when they should have told one another of their love—and then, later, they would kiss on the lips, like the people on the covers of *Life*. It must be wonderful to kiss on the lips!—wonderful and sacred. It seemed almost the last satisfaction, the ultimate intimacy—

an incredible realization of the fact that two people understood each other. . . . Then there was the first kiss at the altar, when the ceremony was over and the bride, in her long robe of white, took her husband's lips with closed eyes, with face tenderly yielded. . . . Then these visions began to dissolve and to float away on dark waters; dim irrelevant shapes re-emerged and werewhelmed by the dark again, till he drowned in the swell of that warm and infinitely satisfying sea. . . .

He became aware of somebody in the room—somebody in a vague dark gown, who was closing the bathroom door with a gentle and stealthy click. Someone had got into the wrong room. He called out: "Hello!"

"Hello," replied a woman's voice in a cordial whisper. It was the deep full voice of Barbara.

"I—I'm sleeping in this room!" he tried to explain.

She came forward without speaking into the moonlight.

He saw her now in her kimono, with her thick hair about her shoulders, shrouded palely in shadowy silver and with shadows under her brows.

"Did I wake you up?" she inquired.

"Oh, no," he answered, puzzled and uneasy, "I wasn't asleep at all. It's perfectly all right."

She sat down on the bed beside him, so that the panes of silver light from the window were broken across her lap. It occurred to him that she might be in need of some immediate spiritual guidance, that she might have come to confide to him some struggle or some agony of the soul. . . . He noticed that her thin silk kimono was moulded to the roundness of her thighs and that her feet were clad in little slippers with round puffs of silk at the toes.

There was a momentary silence. Then, "I thought I'd come and visit you," she said. "I didn't want to go to bed so early."

He was embarrassed and could only say, "What time is it?"

"Oh, it's early," she replied, and bent towards him, as he sat up in bed, her dark hair falling about her face. She whispered: "You can kiss me if you want to."

But a proud and virginal shrinking made him hesitate a moment. Then he leaned over toward her quickly, and his lips, which would have found her cheek, were drawn to her swiftly proffered mouth; he touched it in a brief clumsy kiss. As her own lips were still parted and she seemed to expect something more, he kissed her again, and again, embracing her with awkward arms.

And in that timid self-conscious embrace, those dry half-terrified kisses—at the touch of her warm wet mouth, the smell of her clothes and skin, he suddenly became a lover, a new person had burst from within him—a person infinitely stronger and infinitely more exciting. His old self had shrivelled in the blast to a brittle and hollow shell. His shyness was melting away.

"I love you, Barbara!" he breathed, and pressed his mouth against hers in mounting intoxication. Her mouth was something unexpected, an enormous physical fact, something brutal and overwhelming, of an almost indecent intimacy. He had never known kissing was like that!

Then she disengaged herself from his embrace and swiftly slipped off her kimono. As she bent over for a moment, he had a glimpse of her firm round breasts; he was surprised to find them so large: he had always supposed that young girls' breasts were little low things. He was shocked and recoiled from the sight, as if from something obscene; it drove him back into himself. . . .

She whispered, "It's better that way."

"Oh, you mustn't do that!" he objected.

"Why not?" she asked. "Don't you like it?"

"I don't think you ought to," he said.

"I thought you said you liked me."

"That's just why I don't want you to. I don't want you to—to compromise yourself."

"Nobody'll know."

"Somebody might.—And besides, it's not the right thing to do. We—oughtn't to do like this." His protestations sounded childish.

"I don't see why you say you like me then!"

He could feel how warm she was as she lay beside him there, her face half hidden in the pillow. But he sat upright and prosaic.

"I do like you," he replied and tried to assume a correcter tone, tried to bring the conversation closer to his ideal standard for such scenes. "You're the only woman I've ever loved." In his attempt to achieve his end, he bent to kiss her forehead gently, but again she offered him her lips and again they overwhelmed him. In a moment, he was down beside her, with one arm about her back. She came up close against him and he slipped his other arm beneath her; then she came to place with her arms about him and he found himself embracing her body, which, solid, soft and hot, lay against his thighs and breast. So this was the real Barbara, this solid living body!—not merely the face at the top of a dress that one knew in ordinary life. How wonderful it was to lie against another person's body like that! All the pains and constraints of his life seemed to melt in a sudden blaze; he was flooded with a gratitude and joy that were close to tears. That warm solid body was everything—all happiness, all peace! It was not an embrace, but a different world, a different kind of life—a noble, divine life, all joy and splendor and strength, and all mastery and power: for now that he was master of this body, he was master of the world!

"I love you! I love you!" he repeated, and she turned her mouth for more kisses. . . .

But, as they lay, he felt the waking of desire. . . . In horror, he drew away. How base that that should have happened! How dreadful if she should have noticed!—She was lying with eyes closed and lips parted, her cheeks all flushed and hot.

He wanted to rouse her and warn her: "We mustn't stay here like this!"

"Why not?" she demanded softly, half opening her eyes and half smiling.

"Because—because it isn't right. We mustn't, honestly.

You really ought to go now. We—we can see each other to-morrow.”

“You don’t need to be afraid,” she said. “I know what . . .”

“Please go, Barbara!” he insisted, half pleading, half assuming the tone of an older person reasoning with a child about matters it doesn’t understand. “You and I mustn’t . . . until after we’ve been married.”

“Married?” she replied. “I’m never going to get married!”

This brought him up against a blank wall: he was silent for a little.

“Won’t you marry me?” he asked at last and was aware that it sounded foolish.

“I’m not going to marry anybody,” she said. “I don’t want to be married! You’ll have to wait a long time for me if you wait to have me marry you!”

He was silent again for a moment, then he doggedly returned to his point: “You and I oughtn’t to be together like this without being married.”

“Oh, why shouldn’t we?” she retorted. “Everybody does!”

“No, they don’t.”

“Yes, they do.—Look at the debutantes!” she continued with indignation, turning over on her back. “You don’t think they’re all so pure, do you?”

“I certainly think they all ought to be,” he replied, driven back into priggishness.—And he noticed how beautiful her throat was, as her head, thrown back on the pillow, uncovered its smooth firm bow. He would like to kiss her there, he thought.

“Why?” she demanded. “Why should they be?” And she delivered this terrible judgment: “Do you know why girls stay pure? It’s just to get themselves married! They just hang on to their old purity so that the man’ll still want something from them. They won’t let him have it unless he marries them. That’s how they get married! If they didn’t, a whole lot of girls would never get married at all.—But I don’t care! I do whatever I want and there’s lots of men who are crazy to marry me just the same!”

"I don't think that's true at all!" he protested. "Everybody ought to—try to keep clean—because—"

"Oh, you talk just like Boards!" she cried—she seemed nervous and irritable now. "I thought you were a good sport."

"If it's being a good sport to let you—"

She suddenly sprang up, cutting short his righteous declaration, in which he had just been converting his note of complaint into the authentic high admonition of the Y.M.C.A. She determinedly threw on her kimono and shod her bare feet with slippers. He noted how cunning the puffs were.

"Don't go," he said. "Look a minute—"

"I thought you wanted me to go. You just said I *had* to go!"

"Oh, please don't be sore!" he pleaded. "I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. I only—"

"Hurt my feelings!" she flung at him, wrapping the kimono across her breast. "*You* haven't hurt my feelings!"

She turned to the bathroom door.

"Oh, *please* listen a minute!" he begged, jumping out of bed. "*Please* don't go away like that!"

She stopped without turning around.

"It's simply that I don't want you to think that I—that I don't like you—or that I think there's anything necessarily improper—"

She went out and shut the door with a bang that shocked his nerves.

He stood for a moment in the darkness, staring at the door. Then he found that he was trembling all over and sat weakly down on the bed. He was relieved that she was gone; his soul had been disordered to its depths. . . . After contemplating the moonlight a little, he got back into bed again. All night his thoughts continued to churn violently with the throbbing of his head. Sometimes he was the Christian Leader saving a foolish child from herself; sometimes he was the conqueror of life to whom the splendors of love came easily; sometimes the picture would collapse in a treacherous perplexity and confusion, a terror before unsuspected facts, an unsureness of himself. . . . But, for all

his bewilderment and distress, her kisses and her embrace had drenched all life with a wonder which he had never known before. It was a feverish breathless romance where mighty emotions ran high! It was a drama which dwarfed the setting and where everything but emotion was the setting. . . . When he looked out, at early morning, on the slow gray winter dawn, where the lawn lay silvery and unreal with the whitish bloom of the frost, it was on a grimmer, less familiar world, a world full of mystery and danger, but a world where great men and women lived and died by the grace of great passions.

3.

“And there is another thing I should like you to say a word about,” Mr. Hotchkiss continued to Boards Borden. (They were having a conference in the Bible class room just before the first meeting after the holidays, and the boys sat about the benches in all their official solemnity and cleanliness. Only Hart seemed haggard and distrait: he sat drawing little circles with a pencil on the arm of his seat. The book-cases were black with hymnals and on the walls were a portrait of Christ and a photograph of Mr. John Mott.)—“Something which has been particularly called to my attention during the holidays. I mean the behavior of young girls at dances and, in short, in all their relations with young men. I believe very warmly in dances and in sports of all kinds—I believe in every sort of ‘clean mirth,’ as Kipling says; I believe that young people should be jolly and free together and I think that for the ordinary wholesome boy and girl a chaperon is ridiculous; but it seems to me that the modern young girl is coming dangerously close to the line which separates freedom from license. I don’t speak only of the clothes which are worn and which are hardly proper even for older women, nor of the open sensuality of the new dances—‘cheek to cheek,’ as I believe they are called; but it seems to me that when it becomes tolerated, when it even becomes fashionable, for a well-bred young girl, or a young girl who is supposed to be well-bred, to smoke

cigarettes, to drink cocktails and to tell risqué stories without provoking any surprise or losing caste among her companions, then it is time to begin to consider where this thing is taking us!"

"Well, but Mr. Hotchkiss," retorted Hart, much to everyone's consternation, "do you really think it's up to us here to say what the girls ought to do? I should think that they ought to deal with that at the girls' schools."

"Tell me," propounded Mr. Hotchkiss, with weighty assurance, "who do you think is responsible for the moral standards of the fast young girl? Where did she first learn to drink the cocktail, to smoke the cigarette, to tell the questionable story? Is it not the *young men* with whom she has associated who must have encouraged her in these things! Who taught the girl the unclean story? She can hardly have imagined it herself: she is not yet so corrupt as that. She can hardly, in the first instance, have learned it from another woman. No: some young man must have told it to her—some young man with whom she is on terms of friendship and whom she perhaps innocently thought to please by exhibiting an interest in such stories.—But no friendship can long remain pure which indulges in such impurities as these. The girl may think it only a joke—something which exists only in words: but the thought is father to the deed. The thing which you imagine to-day is the thing you perform to-morrow. The next time they dance together, she may perhaps permit him to hold her more closely; the next time, she may consent to drink with him and may allow him to flirt with her a little—though he may not really be in love with her nor have any sincere intention of marrying her. The next time. . . ."

"Do you think," interrupted Hart a little acidly and terribly constrained, "that she ought to make him promise to marry her before she lets him begin to make love to her?"

"I think," replied Mr. Hotchkiss, adopting a more direct severity, and bending earnestly upon Hart his great creased heavy face, saddened by the sinfulness of the world, "that if we lose our reverence for womanhood, we shall lose the keystone of our civilization, and I believe that it is the duty of

the Y.M.C.A. to warn the fellows against allowing their ideal to become debased. They should certainly not be willing to see a young girl do anything which they would not be willing to see their mothers do. If you put that argument to them, they will see the point every time! Without reverence for womanhood, without chivalry and chastity, there can be no clean and enduring love, there can be none of that adoration which you find expressed so beautifully in Browning's lines—

‘Oh, lyric love, half angel and half bird!’—”

Hart found himself regarding Mr. Hotchkiss with hostile and angry eyes, which were also guilty and shy; he had flushed at his last retort and kept his hands pressed against the bench-arms to conceal his trembling tenseness. But his defiance broke out abruptly in all its naked insolence. “I don’t see why a girl should have to make a man promise to marry her before she lets him begin to make love to her! I think that a good deal of this modesty—” (Barbara’s verdict hung in his mind, but in that company it seemed impossible to repeat it and the inhibition, robbing him of his point, brought his climax down with heartbreaking lameness) “—is—is false modesty!” he concluded; and with the collapse of his speech, his voice broke.

“You ask me,” replied Mr. Hotchkiss, with magisterial composure, while the others sat in the stricken silence which always follows a breaking voice, “you ask me if a young girl should let a man make love to her without promising her marriage. I answer that there’s all the difference in the world between clean and unclean love and that any decent wholesome girl knows which kind is being offered her.”

“Listen, old man!” said Boards, coming over to Hart. “You’re not feeling very well, are you? You don’t have to come to-night. Somebody else can read the minutes.”

“That’s all right,” snapped Hart irritably. “I’m all right!”

“Have you any fever?” asked Mr. Hotchkiss, feeling his forehead and pulse. “I learned how to be a doctor among the lumberjacks,” he explained, as he took out his watch,

smiling in proud gratification at feeling himself rough and ready, a man among men. "The only regular doctor in the woods lived about a hundred and twenty miles away, so I had to be doctor and druggist and trained nurse all in one!"

"No, I don't think so," answered Hart between anger and the temptation to flee. "I've just got a little headache."

"Too many dances during the holidays?" inquired Mr. Hotchkiss smiling, in an undeceptive attempt to speak of these things as other men.

"No," said Hart, "I'm just out of sorts."

"Look here, my boy," said Mr. Hotchkiss, "you'd better go to bed right away. It's a losing game in the long run to use up all your nervous force by trying to keep on working when you're sick. When I was up in the lumber-camps, I rode a hundred and sixty miles and conducted five services and a 'sing' one Sunday, when I could hardly stand up with chills and fever, and I've never got over the effects of it. I've never been able to do the same work. Now you'd better go to bed right away and see the doctor the first thing in the morning."

He left the room on the verge of tears; but, as he walked out across the frozen campus, Mr. Hotchkiss and the Y.M.C.A. passed swiftly beyond the limits of his consciousness, outshone by the splendor in his heart.

Nothing else in the world was real except his overwhelming longing! The school itself, but a few weeks ago the scene of his whole drama, a drama which he followed with excitement, had shrunk to a stage for amateurs, whose triviality enraged him. His school fellows were children! the masters were fogeys and pedants. He was a mighty and tragic figure, humiliated by these pygmies. He strode among them like a god. . . .

He knew what passion was! They knew nothing of passion! The word thrilled and terrified him and filled him with drunkenness. Now he understood the conduct of the people in the stories of Maupassant; now he understood why Antony and Cæsar had behaved so badly about Cleopatra. Now he was living the very lurid dream which had seemed so fantastic and remote! He shuddered at its rank carnal-

ity, yet it conquered him and made him proud. He was a man now at last, like the heroes of Maupassant, like Antony and Cæsar!

In his room he found Eddie O'Brien doing Greek with another boy. He had hoped there would be no one there so that he could write Barbara another urgent letter (the third since he had left Greenwich), and he regarded them with undisguised disgust.

"Thought you were at the meeting," said Eddie.

"I'm not feeling very well," he explained shortly. "I've got a headache."

"That's a darn shame," said Eddie. And they went on doing Greek.

"οὐ γὰρ πῶ ποτέ μ' ὦδέ γ' ἔρως φρένας ἀηφεκάλυψεν—

'For never this desire concealed my mind'—now wait a minute: this ὥς must be the end of it, that must mean 'as'—
ὥς σεο νῦν ἔραμαι καί με γλυκὺς ἵμερος αἰρεῖ."

"Say, look: we don't have to do these lines: I've got that passage marked to omit."

"There must be something dirty in it then. λέχοσδε, that means something about 'bed'—Say, I've got to read this passage: it's got something about a bed in it!"

"Oh, pshaw!" (shutting the book) "you couldn't hire me to read any more of that stuff than I have to—bed or no bed!" . . .

He hated their slipshod work; he hated their imbecile jests. What did they know about Paris and Helen? He had worked the passage out himself—and now he saw the girl and the young man . . . all smooth and lovely and white. ". . . *It's better that way!*" she had said. . . . What right had such creatures as these school-boys to chatter and brawl in his room? . . . He opened the window to look out on the snow-laden roofs of the town. A spell had been laid upon it: its sordidness was smoothed and made beautiful; the dreary life which one knew had been utterly purged away. The very streets were blank pages in which no one's name had been traced. But from the yellow lights in the windows he knew that life there was still warm. He pictured pleasant family

scenes—young couples, just come back from their honeymoons, settling down to the intimacy of winter. He saw in his imagination a fresh young woman in a kimono, with brown hair unloosed about her shoulders, who sat happy, before a fire, with a clean-cut young man at her side. He envied that clean-cut young man. . . . Through the frozen air, from a distance, came the brisk jingle of sleigh-bells. And he thought of how lovers rode out on moonlight nights like this: he had heard that lovers revelled in a moon. They would make a safe little world of warmth against the icy night through which they moved. He would put his arm about her in the sleigh and with the other arm drive the horse—through the empty country roads, terrible and lovely beneath the moon, through the stiff-standing pines of the mountains that walled their path about with black. And he would feel how warm she was and how he guarded her against the night, against the snow and the lonely moon and the shadows that lurked in the pines. They would be reckless and gay together and conquer the cold road with songs. But stay! there are wolves behind us!—you can hear their faint yelping in the distance—they draw nearer—Don't be afraid!—They are all about us now, barking sharply and with intensest savagery!—Bang! Bang! Bang! they are dead!—their blood lies black on the snow. He would put his arm about her again and feel her warm bulk against his side. What a brave staunch partner she was! And when they were back at last in the house, he would take her in his arms altogether; he would kiss her once warmly on the lips, then she would go up before him to their room. . . .

"Say, do you want to freeze us out?" came the voice of the visiting friend.

"Yes, for Pete's sake," yelled his room-mate, with the superior harshness of intimacy, "put that damn window down!"

He remained at the window a little longer to indicate his contempt for them; then he withdrew and threw himself on the bed.

"Hope we don't disturb you," said the visitor. "We'll be through before long."

"How long will it be?" asked Hart with authoritative distinctness.

"Oh, we'll be done pretty soon!" said Eddie.

They turned the lamp-shade around so that the bulb wouldn't shine in his eyes, and he detested them for their attentions, which seemed to him insincere—since it was evident he couldn't rest with them talking in the same room. . . .

Oh, he was in agony to possess her! He could think of nothing else night and day. To hold her in his arms again! He had once held her in his arms! It was incredible—it must be a dream. How could he ever have lived through that rapture—so prosaically, so calmly? In retrospect, it had become for him the central experience of his life. It was a burst of illumination which blazed like a pillar of fire on the horizon of the past and the further he receded from it the more magical and amazing it seemed and the more imperative became the necessity of somehow rejoining it. . . . Wherever he went nowadays, he felt that he bore a radiance about him and he had only to think where he had been for his heart to be lifted with joy. . . . And it was so different from what he had thought!—not a bit like the covers of *Life*. His mind was no longer divided into two absolutely separate compartments—a compartment for lavatory scribblings and a compartment for ideal love: the dyke had been broken down and the turbid waters of desire had been loosed on the chaste embraces, the aquiline kisses, of *Life*. The plump wanton ladies of Boccaccio came romping into the love scenes of Booth Tarkington and the two were being founded together into something which was terrible, which was reality. . . . "*It's better that way!*"—the words seemed to reach him electric with the life of another world. Oh, to find it, to enter it again! To find the world where people spoke that language!

He must write her a letter at once to show her he knew now how to speak to her. And yet wouldn't that perhaps be a mistake so soon after his last letter? He had had no reply to his first and it would make him ridiculous to write so much: it would weaken his position. But if he were to make

it an ultimatum on a high and vigorous tone?—in that case, she must let him know definitely that she was actually in love with him or she must plainly say that she wasn't. But what if she should become indignant and perversely declare that she wasn't when she actually was? Suppose he should spoil the whole thing by approaching her too clumsily?—Ah, if he could only go down to Greenwich and talk it all over with her!—he would put his case so eloquently, so nobly, with such fire and compelling force, that she would understand what his love meant and could not but answer with hers. . . . How intolerable that it would be still at least three weeks before he could get away from school!—And as a makeshift in his bitter privation, he pictured himself running off to see her—getting out by the fire-escape, making a dash for the back fence, catching an early train to New Haven. . . .

The students shut up their books and slammed down the roller-top desk. The sound of slippers was heard in the corridor. The rough-house was about to begin. Hart was sickened as he thought of tearing off people's pajamas, of pushing them under the bed. He withdrew to the shower-room and took a very long hot shower which lasted until lights-out. As he ruminated in the steam, the fancy of escaping from school presented itself as a possibility; and, in a moment, his will had seized upon it and made it an overmastering purpose which beat down all opposition and filled him with excitement and panic.—After all, why shouldn't he go? It would be betraying the Y perhaps, the confidence and respect of the masters; it would mean, if he ever returned, a trying scene with Dr. Durham; but, in the end, they would take him back on the strength of his excellent record.

He could say that he had been worried about something, some personal matter he couldn't explain, and they would treat him sympathetically. He thought of Butts Bigelow's escapade to Boston and it terrified him for a moment to consider that his own conduct had something in common with his. . . .

But what were such qualms to the anguish of three more weeks at school? With this racking uncertainty and this

eternally tormenting desire, he was unable to interest himself in anything; he could not even do his assignments. If he only knew where he was with Barbara, he could be more brilliant than he had ever been. With the support and stimulation of her love, he could be happy and clear-headed and strong! He would be the hero of the inter-school debate!

Perhaps, when he came back to school, he would be able to announce his engagement—in which case he would certainly be forgiven.—In any case, he must go! He chafed now more fiercely at five hours than he formerly had at three weeks. He lay in bed and thought angrily of the intolerable time he would have to wait till it was late enough to leave. . . .

It was three o'clock at last. He got up and took his clothes from the chair and cautiously made his way to the bathroom, looking furtively down the hall to make sure the master's room was dark. The movement set going again the painful rhythm in his head. When he had dressed, he returned to his own room, where his room-mate, breathing heavily, was entombed in a comforter. He had tied the laces of his shoes together and slung them around his neck and he made his escape swiftly through the window in a pair of noiseless wool-lined slippers.

The fire-escape steps were very narrow and coated with frozen snow, as was also the hand-railing, and he had to descend very slowly. At the bottom, he crunched through a snow-crust and had a terrible moment of fear when he expected a bolt from the Head Master's house to strike him dead. But once he had left the school grounds—among the sleeping streets of the town—he breathed deep of the strong cold air and lifted his head in release. How clear-minded he felt! How energetic!—If he could only talk to her now—walk into a house and find her! In that moment, he was a dashing fellow who had just claimed a daring freedom—but at the same time a level-headed hero with the situation well in hand, who in breaking the rules of the school had not sacrificed his responsibility nor his fundamental seriousness. And Barbara was no longer a rowdy wanton, but a

noble and passionate woman—a Guinevere. And he, in his illicit love, was still noble and dignified and intense. Where he had formerly pictured himself as Galahad, he now figured as Lancelot. . . . The houses were dark and faceless. People lying in each other's arms, he thought. . . .

At the deserted desolate station, he half expected the ticket-man to challenge him: "Say, you're leavin' pretty early, aintcha?" or to ask for his card of permission, but the old man seemed quite indifferent and went back to doze against the stove. . . . He paced the cracks in the station platform back and forth past a squad of milk-cans, and at last, at 5:15, the 4:30 train appeared, lounging along in a tranquil somnolence as if the nervousness and haste of men had not yet waked up to excite it.

In the train, he tried to think exactly what he should say when he found himself with Barbara, but he went to sleep against the window. . . . They stopped joltingly every ten or fifteen minutes at unfamiliar stations with irritating names—East Walsheim, Bloodgood, Medill. He could hardly believe they existed; he had never heard of them before. They intensified an uncomfortable feeling of having rashly broken through into an unfamiliar world. He had somehow lost his grip on his project and now, when he thought of it again, it had come to seem quite ridiculous in the raw and livid winter light which harmonized with the thawing snow and the unloading of morning milk-cans so much better than with the gestures of passion and of compelling devotion. It was a feverish fancy of the evening, a vision of late hours and electric light. On one occasion, when he had dozed off and abruptly waked again, he was utterly unable to believe that he had ever undertaken his errand. In the air of that dreary dawn, romance was thawing out like the snow. The ache he had felt for days reappeared as a hopeless blueness, which kept brimming up toward tears. . . .

At New Haven he partially revived by the aid of a cup of coffee and a very old thick chicken sandwich, lined with a pale slice of rubber, which seemed to have been preserved for a great many years under an enormous fly-blown glass

bell, as if it had been the sandwich of some celebrated person. . . . He told himself that he now felt fit to go on and play his great scene. He would be serious, earnest, yet charming. He shuddered in violent revulsion when he imagined the figure he had made. How insufferably priggish he had been! With what stupid obstinacy he had protested! But this time he would make no mistakes. She should quickly understand and forgive. Had she not once held him in her arms? Were they not pledged, deeply, supremely?

Yet there was something about the whole affair which made him apprehensive and uneasy. The day after she had come to his room, she had refused either to bowl or to play billiards, and he had left the following day. It was as if his conception of their relations were founded on some insecure base. Was there really something wrong about it? Did he fear to find out what it was? . . . His impatience was diluted now with complacency in delay: he clung tight to the security of the hours that stretched between him and his goal and he gazed out at the skeleton landscape between New Haven and Greenwich with a morbid relish for every dry winter meadow mottled with melting snow, for every long flat factory building, for every black ice-glazed stream, for every hard square-angled town with its hollow box-like houses, because they were still natural things untransfigured by that mysterious danger, a neutral ground still immune from the Gorgon of beauty and desire.—At last, with a dreadful sinking, he beheld the outskirts of Greenwich, littered with dead-looking cottages that seemed all to be closed for the winter; but with a rapidly awakening excitement, he descended from the train. He felt that all the people in the station must notice he was getting out.

He went first to a small hotel and called up the Bordens' house. Barbara was not at home but was coming back later to tea. It was now almost noon: he had nearly five hours to wait. This at once annoyed and relieved him.—He looked at himself in a glass and was sickened by what he saw: instead of a handsome and dashing young man full of passion and determination, he beheld a pasty, puffy-faced child with a pitiful hangdog look, whose collar was smudged with soot

and whose derby seemed much too big for him. Perhaps it was just as well, after all, that he should have time to refresh himself. He took a room at the hotel and lay down and slept for three hours. . . .

At half-past four, the January day was collapsing as a total failure: the world seemed melting away dirtily in slush and drizzle and mist; the very light was dissolving in a grayish fluid like the snow.—Hart summoned a rickety taxi and curtly bade it drive him to the Bordens'.

At the door-step, the colliers and the Great Dane assailed him with a deafening clamor, and as soon as the door was opened the others came eagerly to join them. Damn the dogs! He had forgotten them. They swept him along like a sea. It was impossible to keep one's dignity among them!—Then Mrs. Borden appeared and explained that Barbara was not back yet, but wouldn't he come in and have some tea?

By a lamp in the monumental gloom of the heavily oak-panelled sitting-room, she presided with her slight air of uncertainty, which ordinarily put him at his ease. She was glad it was thawing at last: she hated cold weather, she said. Her husband always used to say that she might have been born in the South, though she had really been born in Illinois. They had very severe winters sometimes out there. Perhaps that was why she hated them so. She remembered how when she was a child they used to tap the maple-trees in winter. She had thought there was nothing so good in the world as eating maple-syrup and snow.

Hart sat at a strain of attention, saying "Yes" and "Really" and "No."

Then Barbara burst in and his fate was upon him at last. As he got up to shake her hand, he felt his knees quaking under him. She took it with a casual "Hello," in which he thought he saw a studied indifference.

In her wake was a tall young man with enormous feet and hands, who, when he talked, displayed horse's teeth. He was introduced as Mr. McGuffy and Hart, in consternation, recognized him as 'Runt' McGuffy, the celebrated Princeton Tackle.—The effect of this recognition was instantaneously crushing. Hart, in spirit, crawled under his chair and asked

only to be left there in abjection. In the first place, McGuffy was at college—which made him a hero and a god; it made him a man instead of a boy. College was the great world beyond, to which a school-boy ascended trembling; in it men heroically ‘made good’ or catastrophically failed. And—what especially bulked in Hart’s mind as the effect of Y.M.C.A. speeches—they were exposed to all sorts of sinister and almost irresistible temptations. The man before him, so assured, so superior in his demeanor, had been confronted by those temptations, had perhaps even yielded to them. How he hated and envied him! Barbara no doubt liked him better for that!—And then, further, he was a football star—just the sort of man—he saw it all—that the energetic Barbara would pick out! He kept up a brave pretense of enjoying the conversation, but he sat watching it as if it were something in which he had no real part, something inconsequential and remote, which he viewed through a haze of emotion. It must be plain to everyone, he thought, how he felt and what he had come for.

McGuffy, from behind his legs, which were mountainously crossed, talked clumsily, amiably, of the team, with the knowingness of sophomore year—while Barbara turned his more moderate strictures upon certain of the Yale players into the most venomous of attacks upon the whole Yale team, which she seemed to worry in her teeth as she pointed out their lack of guts, their laughable fumbling with the ball, their abysmal bad sportsmanship. It made Hart shudder to hear her; he felt out of it in the presence of such savagery, and uneasy, as if for his own skin.

At last, McGuffy moved to go. “Well, I guess I better ease,” he said.

“I must go in a minute, too,” murmured Hart.

“Can I take you anywhere?” asked McGuffy genially. “Drop you in town just as well as not. The roads are pretty rotten now. I wouldn’t advise you to walk.”

Hart stammered out something lame about not going for a minute or two. Barbara went with her friend to the door and left Hart and Mrs. Borden again.

“Won’t you stay and have dinner with us?” Mrs. Borden suggested.

He hastily declined, humiliated by the fear that she might have thought him waiting to be asked.

Barbara presently returned and the conversation dragged. She talked with her mother about the bad roads which made motoring impossible, and he felt himself helplessly shut out. At last, it was half past six: he was keeping them from getting dressed.

He got up and took his leave of Mrs. Borden, then turned in desperation to Barbara. "May I speak to you a minute?" he pleaded.

She led the way out in silence.

"Well, what can I do for you?" she demanded.

They were among the Japanese umbrella-stands and the comic hunting pictures of the hall. She stood before him in a bright red jersey which showed the roundness of her breasts. Her color was very high. She had assumed a rather snippy manner.

But it was not her snippy manner which turned Hart to a helpless child before her. It was the tremendous, the awful prestige of her sexual experience. In its presence, all Hart's school authority, his intelligence, his superior age, shrivelled and fell away and left him naked in inane virginity.

When he commenced to talk at last, he sounded to himself like a gasping tearful little boy. "I wanted to tell you, Barbara," he blurted out, "that I'm sorry about the other night. I'm sorry I was such an awful prig. I don't wonder that you were mad about it—but—my ideas about a lot of things have changed since then."

"They have!" she checked him up with irony.

He went on, gaining courage with his passion. "And I want to tell you, Barbara, that I'm in love with you. I think about you all the time. I can't work or sleep or do anything now, because I'm thinking about you all the time." He tried to give her his whole rebirth in one stupendous revelation. "Life has been entirely different since I've been in love with you!"

"Lots of people are in love with me," she replied.

"But you don't know how *I* love you! I love you the way Lancelot loved Guinevere! I could stand with you against the whole world! I don't care about—about public opinion.

I want to be with you—to face life with you! I want to be with you—for ever!”

She smiled at him mockingly. “I think you better go and get some nice little girl that won’t scare you.”

“But I don’t want a nice little girl! You’ve spoiled all the nice little girls for me. I hate everybody else. The other girls make me sick. All I told you in my letters was absolutely true!” He was sick and giddy from the shock. In that moment it seemed incredible that she who had lain in his arms, who had yielded her body to him, who had shared with him the terrible ecstasy, the intimate communion of love, should be willing to betray him now, to deny that communion and that ecstasy. He felt like crying out, “Oh, Barbara! have you forgotten where we’ve been together?” But he only began to reproach her: “Why didn’t you answer my letters?”

“I never write letters,” said Barbara.

“I don’t think that’s fair!” he replied—“I wish you still liked me,” he went on.

“You reminded me of a boy I like who’s away in Canada.”

He was dazed as by a cannon’s loudness.

She stood imperiously before him, her hands in her jersey pockets. The dogs came trooping back into the hall, tails waving and jowls agrin, delighted to have found their mistress. He looked at them for distraction. He knew that he had no place there.

In his desperate agitation, he had begun to wrench on his overcoat and, as he did so, there fell from his pocket the shapeless wool-lined slippers which he had used for the fire-escape.

Barbara laughed. “Did you bring those along,” she demanded, “for fear you’d get cold feet?”

“I left school last night,” he tried to explain. “I’m never going back again.”

“What are you going to do?” she asked.

“I’m going out into the world.—I’m going to work on a paper or something!”

“That’s all right,” she said, smiling suddenly and with genuine friendliness, “I do like you. Come down with Boards again sometime.”

He brightened. "Maybe I could see you sometime during the Easter holidays. Couldn't you come to New York—and see a show?"

"I won't be here then."

"Where will you be?"

"I'm going to Toronto."

"Well, good-bye," he said, shaking her hand. "I'll see you sometime later maybe."

He pulled open the big door and strode off down the night of the drive—burning face against the cold—as if with the energy of some sturdy errand. But the further he plunged among the bare black trees and the shapeless bush-masses of the grounds, the more he felt like some captured seaman marching bravely toward the end of the plank. He was advancing into emptiness, into a universe divested of meaning; and all about him, in the winter desert, the darkness seemed to ache.

VIRGINIA MOORE

PENANCE

The eyes will dim, the hopeless mouth will sear,
And all the senses rally and give way—
Yet speak the thing out desperate and clear
And let the soul recover as it may,
And creep back, shamed, to things we loved together,
Like wind and water and the blessed sky,
And learn to stand up straighter in bad weather,
And give the earth our penance till we die.

We were not great enough, nor good, nor kind,
To keep a love so given and so taken:
We let the body's illness threaten mind,
And something—not the heart of us—was shaken. . . .
O love, O love, for thy stern sake I know
That we must rise, humble ourselves, and go.

W-TT-R B-NN-R

POSTHUMOUS POEMS OF EMANUEL MORGAN

*(On hearing from Budapest of the death of Anne Knish
by an obscure disease, Emanuel Morgan committed suicide
at a sanitarium in Pittsburgh.)*

• OPUS 111

I laid the griffin's egg
And you are hatching it—
And this is your spectrum.
Anne Knish.

The staircase, the landing, the upper-hall carpet,
Are calling you mother.
You are weary of the desert-sanded rug,
The grown and withered words—
But the upper-hall carpet
Is calling you mother.

After the end
Comes always the beginning . . .
And when you begin to understand this,
I shall have done with meaning it.

OPUS 113

Enormous and terrible surf,
For all the years of your charging,
I lie on the sand
More troubled by a fly.

Enormous and terrible surf,
There are life-guards
But not for me.

For if you came near me with your shout,
I should but rise and walk away—
And the fly would follow.

OPUS 106

This,
In impatience,
Is a spectrum
Of Howard Fribley.

Have you ever seen a fly
Pounce like a lion?
I have.

And I have seen the little legs of Professor Fribley's mind
Slyly approach what seemed an idea
And pounce on it through his spectacles.

And I have heard the cords in his neck
Lower him into the grave,
Creaking.

SPECTRUM OF JOSEPH G.

He melts in memories
Of drinks and of Sunday Schools and women,
His eyes are altars and his voice a prayer.
Bibles might be used for climbing,
And the peak at sunset
Be the rosy flesh of Venus
Lending a hand.

OPUS 107

She clung to me close as water in a pool
And sharp as thunder of the night—
And every pulse of me, rushing out of school,
Shouted delight.

She clung to me close as a river-soaked shirt
And sharp as a sliver under a nail
Till every nerve in me slunk away hurt
And hung its tail.

OPUS 10

Where should God be,
If not at a circus,
In the faces of little boys
With mouthfuls of elephants and acrobats?

If He goes to church,
He falls asleep.

But when two lovers on the Hudson
See the gleaming windows of the city gallop like a courier,
God watches
With mouthfuls of elephants and acrobats.

FRAGMENT

Whether I be a mountain to climb
Or a puddle to look into—
Look,
Take your time.

JAY G. SIGMUND

THE AUCTION

It matters not what blood coursed through their veins,
Whether it was a curious pot-pourri—
The blood of folk who loved the wooded hills
Or ones who held the saltness of a sea.

Some potent blend of mountain and of wave,
Had put the iron urge within their hearts;
An urge that coaxed and nagged and routed rest,
Making them long for roles in giant parts.

And so the felloes of their rolling wheels
Took up this call along a fenceless road;
Their draught-spans held crude neck-yokes to the sun
And sweated down the prairie with their load.

Each dawn held lures to coax them farther on,
Each night the stars kept lookout in the blue
And rivers all were shallow from the drought,
That they might cross and go their journey through.

Along an inland stream there grew tall oaks,
Firm-rooted; waiting for the axe's steel;
All ready to be changed to cabin sills
After a marsh had stopped the wagon's wheel.

And when the tern and brant had given signs
That mad Squaw-Winter's hags were on the way,
The red men saw a wreath of smoke wind up
From where a hearth was builded on the clay.

Soon, where the deer had fed, were blackened stumps,
The curly bulls raced on before the plow
And prairie lilies trembled as they fell
Before the scythe, to wither for the mow.

The woman sang a lilting song at dawn
And rocked the cradle while she spun her thread;
The man, with pursed-up lips was light of heart
And sowed the crop which furnished gifts of bread.

No year went by, but saw his coop and sty
Grow fuller, with their crowing, grunting life:
At times he felt exultant as he thought
That he had taken such a one to wife.

The solemn pageant of the years filed by
And brought Decay to swing his scythe and strut:
Rainstorm and sun and blizzard played their part
And lined the cornfield hills with gulch and rut.

But when a farm-house loses roof and porch
And alien horses walk surrounding soil,
Certain it is the man who plants the crop
Is gathering the scars of furrow-toil

Along the river was a house of logs,
Where they might go at chosen times to pray:
(Perhaps this God which they besieged with words
Could only smile and turn his face away.)

One plot of ground, along a rugged slope,
Had never felt the tearing of a share
But one new dawn in winter saw the sun,
Gleaming across a shaft of marble there.

The first-born found his palms already shaped
To buckle harness-straps and grasp a hoe
And soon his arms grew used to muscle-sting,
When spring at last had rotted all the snow.

The summer came and brought its sweating rounds—
The autumn brought its stacks and fodder shocks,
A pair of foal were in the pasture lot—
A score of new lambs bleated in the flocks.

The orchard boughs were bending from a weight
Of crimson globes, and when the frost spread thin
A wagon in a coat of livid paint
Rolled down the road to bring the new corn in.

But since that tombstone on the clay-ribbed knoll
Had raised its whiteness like a midnight ghost,
The wasted woman by the rusted stove
Prepared to greet a never-sleeping host.

And long before the vernal equinox
She fell to muttering and took her bed,
Weakened and pale from too much kitchen-toil
And blighted from the woes which greyed her head.

Across the fields when lamps of night were lit
Her first-born went and there he tarried late;
His boots acreak with newness and his hand
Grown palsied as he swung the wooden gate.

For now the mating urge was welling up—
Two fertile neighbor-farms must join as one—
The woman in his house was fading more—
The neighbor farmer ached to claim a son.

May saw another, whiter, marble slab
Ready to let the pale, green lichens cling:
Summer crept on and something in his breast
Stirred like a moving breadth of night-moth's wing.

After the droning harvest-sickle stilled
He brought his woman home across the field;
Pointing with awkward pride to mounds of straw
In proof of what his fertile loam could yield.

Winter arrived and found them settled well
In all the drab routine of chores and sleep:
Each week was like the one which came before:
The solstice found their dooryard drifted deep.

Spring and its seed-time came as other springs
Had marched across the hills since time began
And new life stirred within the woman then
While spade and plowshare called the sinewed man

Sprouting of oats: the bitterns in the marsh
Sounded their booming nesting cry once more
And as the summer waned the woman watched
The season's drama from her kitchen door.

Then year chased year as baying beagle hounds
Pursue a rabbit through the river hills;
Three times the cradle held a stranger child
Which met the rounds of fretting childhood ills.

Often the laugh of children echoed loud—
The seasons had their tiny suns of light
Something there must be when the sky of life
Is gray and scant of hope to make it bright.

But as these new feet trod the mill of youth,
Their young eyes looked afar at city smoke:
The road they took to school seemed short and dull
And full of powdered dust which rose to choke.

The lane which passed the bending willow row
Had lines of tall, rank weeds which towered high:
The garments which they wore were finger-sewn
With tints which grew offensive to the eye.

Then high and higher rose the city-smoke,
Spreading its curved witch-finger on the sky
To lure them on and leave another stone
Upon the hill, beside the plot of rye.

And then they went to look on dancing lights
With eyes which knew the hillside bur-oak's shade.
They learned to silence hearts which cried from hurt
By wearing garb which alien hands had made.

They broke the faith with turf and hawthorn tree
To tread the crowded ways on leaden feet,
Rather than wage a battle with the clods
And shrivel like the milk-weed in the wheat.

And in that cobwebbed attic there is left
Their toys of childhood; symbols of the past:
Reminders of the fickleness of joy—
That thing which seldom comes and cannot last.

The years pressed on and left their coat of rust
On implements that cut the rich black ground,
While all the time the clock of loneliness
Was running most relentless in its round.

But sifting snows of winter always fall;
The mists and rains of April never fail:
There always will be hands to scatter oats—
There always have been arms to swing a flail.

Now is the day for Fate to sink a spike
In one more plank of seasoned coffin-pine:
The poster on the bridge has spread its type:
“An Auction . . . Free Lunch . . . Harrows . . .
Cattle . . . Swine!”

Now listen to that swelling yokel throat
Which spills the jargon of an auctioneer
And see these husks of men the soil has whipped
Who come to see a long fight finished here.

There is a man who lives on usury—
He comes from where the smokestacks belch their grime
And there is one who knows the worth of junk;
He always comes at just the fitting time!

When you are leaving, take the timber lane
And follow down the bluffs, the bayou way:
Its worth the drive to see the belfried house
Where all these ridge-road people go to pray!

Oh, when you cross the winding railroad track,
A mile from where the river makes its bend;
Look for the somber corn-town where a man
Nods by a stove and wishes for the end!

LOUIS GILMORE

VARIATION ON A THEME OF CATULLUS

You order a chocolate soda
I also
The boy brings them

With bent head
You ply a straw

I observe
That chocolate is an aphrodisiac
Unfortunately
Mild

You finish your soda
Your head lifts
With a smile

I beg of you
Have another
Then a hundred
Then another
Then a second hundred
Then yet another
Then a hundred

As for me
To gaze at you
Is chocolate enough
And more than enough

EDNA BRYNER

THE YEAR AT BOILING SPRING

THERE was despair and a beginning. She had come her own way, of adventure, of Affection, southward. She had made a bargain: for a sum of money a sum of work. There was another bargain, not in words; and that she did not understand. She was too young, you see, and had not learned to bargain.

She had not moved yet, of herself, so caught was she, suddenly, strangely, securely. In coils of magic ineluctable: TWENTY-ONE YEARS, closed rounds of growth about the inner node, marking maturity; OUT IN THE WORLD, hyperbola, unloosing infinite roaming; TEACHER, embracing her in circle with the great, Mohammed, Jesus, Socrates.

She had keen measure of her roaming space: flat sand and sand again as of old sea floor; ocean to east a score or so of sand miles (hundreds, thousands?) untraversable. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help." There were no hills. Plantations took the sand, watered by ditches man-cut in from loose-banked stream, from snaky swamp. Shadows—for hills—were groves of oak with tods of mistletoe high up, and oak again, varying; pines, bare-trunked to longest-neededled tops; low Christmas-berried holly; sweet-flowered bay. Railroad and town (where Affection was) were distant thirteen sand miles; three times the same of black earth, so slipped the particles in and out of old spokes.

She had a name, grown to it year by year: Miss Clarity or Charity, Sobriety and Wisdom, Responsibility, at one and twenty! She was two-edge equipped with homely lore of life and mighty learning, languages dead and alive, science, philosophy, Art even, music; Major in literature and mathematics. She had been asked of all this only one thing to qualify, gaining the paper of authority to press her calling state-wide. Six gaunt feet of county superintendent, tuber-

culously coughing, spitting, had asked her definition: a transitive verb. The action, it seems, of such a verb passes from a doer to a receiver, disposing thus of passive mode. She answered, rightly; and attest came.

A fact to reckon with, put down with items of income and expenditure in a notebook. As was the fact there were two hundred children, minister's census, gathered in radius six miles about; five teachers; she the Chief and titled *PRINCIPAL OF BOILING SPRING ACADEMY*. Fact also, they were trained in Pedagogy, with steps I, II, and III; she untrained, but of Learning. They asked her, "Shall we use leaves to show them how the plants grow?" This was not town nor village, rather sparse tribal—planters' scattered dwellings, one Painted house in all, negro tenant cabins; otherwise, growing things with stalks, trunks, flowers, fruits, and *LEAVES*.

The State prescribed a thin red textbook, *AGRICULTURE*, one of the fourteen subjects to be taught within the course of five-day week. Twenty minutes once a week for Agriculture. Their ancestors since sixteen-hundreds planted fields. Red book in hand, she smiled, at them first, then through windows on browned cornstalks and beyond on withered cotton sticklike in the sand. Book words and smiles came back to her. They had a secret, she and they. The secret kept them going through the fourteen subjects week-long. The secret was obvious. No one knew it. *SHE WAS ONE OF THEM*.

She knew that she was unexpected. She was a woman. They had always had a man before. Memorial of last year's tobacco habits still marked the box stove. Memorial of this year's was herself, taking place of him who had run away, when the hour approached, for fear of big boys. They had expected her to weigh enormously, female substitute for man. Here she was, nothing but a girl! And from the *CITY*! (They did not know the shaggy, water-tumbling, mountain stronghold in her, sturdily holding city crown.) She was *NORTHERN*. Learning, girl, took that curse off. They were of the ones who got out of *THE WAR* what they had never had before: *LAND*.

"The birds of the field have their nests, the foxes their holes." As yet, she had no nest, no hole. Where was the mansion of hospitality in a southland flowing with milk and honey? Had she come riding into this sand island behind a shining pair, attended, attentioned? But they had handed her over by way of dinner at the Chairman's house, by way of speeches in the school, as if it were not entirely to her interest and if she but knew what they knew! And they had handed her around, gingerly, to sleep with pasty, collard-fattened girl, to sleep with lovelorn music teacher in Chairman's plantation home, until a House of Permanence was ready. Was the House now ready? Luckless Sixteen and Twenty, run away to marriage and back again, disposed of with old church hewn into dwelling on waste and swamp land, to keep the teachers. Luckless went about with burning faces, lowered eyes, in shame before all. They did not beseech. They bent to punishment of teachers, to cook and carry water. Sixteen already was with child. The food she placed on the long table, blessed before and after, did not bring blessing.

The Principal of One-and-Twenty at work in her room listened to Sixteen weep, to Twenty speak behind thin pine partition. She saw the Year stretch out hard days to Prisoners, chain upon Twenty, leaden ball on Sixteen; herself obdurate metal in the coil of punishment.

She had her measure and she had her mind. Herself began to move, out of the house and down the road to the Painted House; there entered in and spoke. Faces of Committee Man and Wife, astonished, frightened, came out of clouds of words smoking from her of Sixteen and Twenty, of Food, of Things Not to Be Spoken of, of School and Children, Principal, Work, and Peace. Sixteen could not, she said. They asked her in worn English speech question. They feared her care and trouble. She knew they had rooms, many. She made it final. One room she would have. If they would not give food, food she would get and make it for herself. But ROOM! Otherwise, she, PRINCIPAL, WOMAN, STRANGER—Shame for a boasted hospitality!—would not stay.

She moved away with her cloud and moved them with her, moved everything; shifted the very sand of the old sea floor.

There was unsettling, re-settling. She had her room, and food too, as they had, with them. Serene upstairs she nested in the unused wing with cold parlors below and back of her the swamp from which the whip-poor-wills commiserated nightly. Windows she had on three sides, to see oak and pine hill-shadows across low-lying fields. She had her shelf of books. She had a Winged Victory on the wall. Evenings she worked with lamp and books and papers, catching small song birds from flighty subjects. And she wept, nightly, for loneliness, yearning for her own kind, being young.

2.

The time was slow and the time flew. There was upspringing day with bristling, bubbling round of school; an after-hour of sand road walking; an evening meal, half-fearful offering of salt-rising bread and questioning of what the folk in her world ate and did and saw; hours of lamp work in the room upstairs; bed in late and deathly quiet on a tear-watered pillow. There was the week with five such days: end laid in town where Affection was; the long pull there through clogging sand, the sharp quick break and back again.

Relentlessly, gently, proudly, she took them the way of the symbols. From thimbles she tumbled worlds before their mazed eyes. From a thimbleful of letters, a half thimbleful of figures emerged immensities.

From morning until evening, they devoured her. She was a book of books, unreadable, imponderable. They eyed her, searched her, thought her. They devoured her in a day and in another day devoured her again. In the night she became whole. They observed the strict stitching of her little shoes, the white slender folding of her dress, the deft turning of book pages, the warm curve of hair over her attentive ears. The moving of her white enfolded figure drew gleaming wake of eyes. Wonder none had she disappeared, so thoroughly, entirely, consumed was she.

"Come to our house tonight. My people want to hear you talk."

She was young, a child, daughter. She was mature, authority, reference for all. She was old woman full of ancient wisdom and learning from still unwritten books. They pressed upon her for wisdom. She was a slip of a girl, become thinner and thinner for hard pressing. She brought them visions, of CITY, of gold-covered domes, ears of elephants, of man and apes and an all-wise god that made man in such wise as he could go upward forever. They said, "You have led us out of a wilderness."

Her hierarchy of two hundred souls ranked choirs of large and small. Her own big choir of faces above the wood of desks threw seeking lights on her. Besought in the light of their faces, she was frightened. She held the light of her own strong for them. Between them, light quivered as from sun to little suns. Their speech was sleuthed in channels of old indolent streams, worn to a stagnant flow. Hers could not run slow enough for them to catch. They were frightened at her quick, net-throwing speech, besought her in their quivering faces.

She saw the souls of her kingdom, choir on choir, acolytes serving towards distant reserved place. Her heart's fullness was pressure to weeping.

Besought her stuff in the lean body, Blaney, for a healer of men, *manqué* for lack of Latin. She took the road-walk after-hour for him, opened the shut cells of him to the silly list of cases, opened them once, twice, three times, and a fourth to overcome an old affection eyeing her from the pale blue eyes nicheing soap-shiny lightskinned face. She would not forget the look when dawning came over his pinkwhite stale old English cheeks as over new earth, came that she did it for him, simply for the Latin of him!

Besought her minister ordained, blushed from his holy braggadocio to study what the Word means handed hot to men; and the stout girl who was to be his wife, teacher meanwhile, reading *Caesar* with him.

What besought her in the snuff-dipping woman with the fearing eyes? In fat white maggot-sly daughter of Com-

mittee Man? Copper-plate writing youngish father-beaten boy too silent? Deppy-under-the desk for suppression of world-comic laughter? Ernest and Annabel offshoots of a stalwart planter? Languishing thinjawed sister of city-man's wife? Spoiled bright Quaker of a leading family? Greek beauty of boy and girl emerging last from cancerous ancient flesh with ninety years of grandfather chuckling in bed to touch young Principal who could read Oxford Greek testament with him?

From room to room, her white enlinened figure folded in their eyes. She was the Saint blessed by a Learned God to be their Guide. She told them Siegfried and the Dragon. More fearsome she than Dragon, hero than Siegfried. She stamped approval on Miss Sallie, Lettie, of earth, respected. "You have done nicely. They have done nicely." Eyes followed her to the door, to shut door and through, forsaking Sallie Lettie Miss.

She liked as she walked to know that underneath the floor, lifted a little from the dull earth for health's sake, turtles sprawled bulkily. Turtles were nearer than growing things she could see through clean windows. They were turtles, too, the tiny ones, sitting on wooden, home-hewed benches in smallest choir of all. One could play pitch and toss with them. She liked to see their Bessie plump of teacher pitch and toss, menace, smile, spank a little, shake them in their shells, tease and tend and teach. She liked even the little earth eaters who held their arms in the air when games were played, could never bring themselves in rhyme or rhythm, step or beat, ecstatic individually. And lovelorn music teacher with color hollowed in her cheek, red ribbons on her hair and neck and waist and wrists, tinkled piano in small turtle games.

"I'll have to send him to you." Sorry the bother, Miss Sallie meant. "Can't do a thing with him!" Absurd to send a thing as small as that for punishment. She studied him, how he was made. Bad? "Is it you who have been so bad?" She looked with softening on eye-digging sobber, with tender laughter. "Do you think you can be good?" Miss Sallie said it was wonderful what she had done to him!

They had expected trouble and there was no trouble. Only the trouble of her strangeness, of their needfulness. Troubles teamed in a stout harness, pulling a bright-painted cart with the holy image underneath to keep off Satan. They had expected a big woman, weighing. Here she was, a slip of a girl in white linen. They wore white collars out of deference. Trouble was collared. Trouble got through a world of lessons, brooked temptation. Asked her, "What are we anyway, that we should be so proud? Look at our girls, snuff-dipping! What are we?" Luby, who rose for chores at three and walked six to school, she let sleep a while every day on the wood of his desk.

But they were after her to stay and see their God. She had escaped week-ends, so far, to town where the indispensable measure of Affection was. She borrowed a horse here, a horse there, rode with the music teacher; with the half-witted son of Committee Man babbling of what it meant to be with a man after sundown; rode with her youngish petulant host behind the black stallion; walked once, as far as Committee Man's house, who wiser than the rest claimed urgent affair to take him to town.

She knew that the time would come; before the net closed, decided of her own free will to stay. But she exacted tribute of them: to ride the black stallion. Stunned into yielding, they strapped him, quivering, rolling his great eyes at her, into an ancient saddle rotten in the girths. Did he understand her rage, submit for joy of rage that could match his?

Plantation hands gaped, seeing her ride the name for black wickedness. Rages steamed together to the turf of lanes, spaces of flatness;—flat was too flat, they were for mountain ranges—steamed together to the stocklaw gate doubly opposing latched bars and behind, a lowering-horned brown crumple of cow. She slipped from twitching suppleness to make clear way of cow and gate. He sniffed outrageously in a red nostril the thickplowed fields, bolted to the swamp's low forest, rolled saddle and rage in the edge of bushes.

White and black hands brought him to her to lead him

home. Insisting, she rode, helped by black and white unwillingness to the rotten saddle where she sat smiling, not caring, caring nothing whether she rode or sprawled so that the stallion knew. He knew. Proud, with regular hoof-beat, he bore her back to the Yard. Both, in their wildness, had knowledge of yards. And they had gained a modicum of peace.

She went next day to see their God. He held domain in the wooden box of church sheltered within a grove of pines to which, from miles about, wheels creaked the weight of His worshippers to Him. As they entered His holy precincts, men drew away from their wives and held for their male worship's safety to one side of the church. Women left supinely alone, seated themselves, meekly wondering, on the other. Those with wailing infants drew to a dark back corner, hushing fervently without relief of Virgin worship.

At first she did not see Him. She saw her oldest pupil, minister ordained, stiff in self-consciousness on the holy platform, moving his lips, twitching a little. In the choir, young folk raising voices in a hymn of despair, pulled the dead weight of the body spiritual towards their earthly vigor. A prayer droned from a tepid older soul.

She saw God's Chosen One open the Book with gesture of Random and dip out words from Revelation: "Then I saw a great sheet let down." Let down for what? For the offering of their sinful hearts. "Never steal horse from neighbor again." "Never take fodder from a field at night." "Never make meeting at the swamp's round pool." "Never in secret . . ."

From self-glory of saviouring his words rolled, skillfully embracing their offerings of negation, magnanimously offering punishment for positiveness. Rolling words gained their God to him. Spitting words drew spark from the old wood of the holy platform; fire leapt, flame curled, flesh singed, agony of scorching was undergone, while their God gathered Himself into His tangible form and stood in the Well of Eternal Doom, FATHER OF PENALTIES, of Heaviness and Woe, Destruction, Slow Torture.

She saw Him plain, with iron hands and iron bosom, all

made from out their men's essential domination, their women's submission. In the back corner, infants wailed inconsolably.

"Thy people shall not be my people, thy god shall not be my god."

She saw flames die away. She saw sweat and no smile on people's foreheads, minister's lips. Purging was there and no hope; ashes and no aspiring. God receded into the stony caverns of unawakened bosoms. The prayer of hopelessness was uttered. The soul's dirge was chanted.

Wives and husbands drew together again and under the pines the Principal of Boiling Spring Academy held court with parents of pupils. Principal, Parents, Pupils: a Trinity. They said they had never had such a good school.

3.

She had an ease of seeing as the year lurched weeks along. She saw about her and backward and forward. She slid in a groove of the history of her country. She saw English stranded on a sand island since sixteen-hundreds, colony folk with old English speech, "I help him do it." Two centuries of sand had slipped, acres brought forth under the hands of black men who were under the hands of white men. Now black was under white and not effectually. Black kept its young in the log school where Lily White read dissertation on Art and a woolly head of figure bound on a marvelously constructed cross rolled in black agony to Rock of Ages.

She bridged centuries' gap with its swift passings and mixtures of places and people to these few hundred weedy souls rooted in sand at the swamp's black edge. She saw besoms sweeping; disarrayed peacocks croaking on tumble-down walls; acres raggedly idle for want of the will of workers; luxuriantly ruined gardens of roses littering scaly mansions, shaking petals to bare-bottomed babies for dolls' pillows, minding of Italian landscape, lines of Raphael cherubs.

She had a thirst of seeing. Each face in her big choir was

a wonder of being, object historical, allegorical, old-English text propounding riddle; the older folks more wonderful, stranded on the neglected vegetation of themselves; black faces a miracle, compounded jungle sun's magic and terror of white-man-land.

She went to see where her white clothes had been stewing for who knows how many days in the black iron kettle of Aunt Mirandola the Voodoo Woman for who knows what kind of black charms against who knows what kind of black deviltry. Old black fatness on a sand hummock in the sun with a pipe in its rolling lips, a daze in its rolling eyes, and the clothes stewing. Under oak trees in stillness. Nor man nor child disturb the circle. And a white woman can't, won't. "Stew away, clothes, for the broth of Aunt Mirandola!"

She made entertainment, including every soul, even ecstatic earth eaters; played gypsy undetected to note-writing children, dogged country husband; earned money for a new school clock. She put them into strange plays, "The Hour Glass,"—sand enough for it in this waste place! Her big boys placed an avenue of young trees all the way from the road to the school's front door, oaks within and outside slender long-leaved pines.

She went to their houses evenings, bearing visions, drawing out their speech. God had blessed their land, they said, with fish in the streams, three crops a year, and many children in a family. Why had the other people of the world no children? She answered, acquiescent, seeing dancing figures of earth eaters.

There were warm days, there were chill days. The stove-pipe fell and her boys carried the blazing shell to yard adventure.

She yearned for snow, for a covering over the brown and gray of the sand island. Snow came, swansdown light. "Not for thirty years!" they said. Three hours was its life; to her life, thirty.

She yearned for music, for an Aria sung by a Prima Donna, for a Te Deum sung by boys' clear voices, for the mass of a symphony. In her ears was a murmuring of sand

particles slipping, of oak leaves rubbing, of pine needles tippling, of swamp water moving to slow moccasin body. When she bowed her head for the morning prayer, she was filled with a clamor of a host of voices. She opened her eyes widely to make die away the turmoil of her bothered head.

She was in famine, could not eat of cold backbone, cold sweet potato. She was in flood, came safely through on a flatbottomed boat poled by an ancient negro through water swirling to the bridge's safe edge.

The wind blew three days without a moment's stay, blew her into a witch's stupor. She walked alone along sand road and a bullet whistled past her ear. For her or another lone wild bird? She hardly cared. Life and death blew together here.

Week-ends she went to town for Affection's sake, unhindered, helped even, by the loan of a horse. Affection came to her, frowned on the table's cloth of coarse red, on disagreeing food, steel implements for dainty eating; drove away behind a shining pair, imperiously released from sharing.

The year was almost finished. She was dizzy when she stood before her choir. Dizzily their faces muddled and mixed. When she spoke, her voice seemed so far away that she could not recover it. In her ears was a roaring of many winds blowing the carved blocks of white temples down. Blocks fell and the space should have cleared but again white temples stood to be blown.

She dared on the last week-end—there was left of the sum of work only a barbecue, speeches, and meeting—to consult a grave physician, gravely examining, noting thinness, searching source of wind-swept temples. "Pressure," he said; and "immediate," he said: "your whole life," he said.

The Committee Men did not show such obdurateness as might have been expected. They only subtracted a week's proportion from her last month's pay. "Life; my whole life. I am very young and it is urgent!" But her host who was Chairman turned surly, refusing farewell. "Who cares for your life? There's a week here still. You should be here to see the barbecue and sit among the people when they

eat." His wife, timidly sorry, pressed hands and whispered that it was all right.

Through her hierarchy she passed for the last time, through streaming rivers of tears, a Saint already headless. Young girls must kiss and the boys touch hands. Little turtles sprawled tiny gestures and earth eaters waved whole bodies. Her own tears gushed as she moved down the avenue of young oaks and pines, watering their roots. She wept for love of the souls that were young and full of promise. They were passing, sands and souls of Boiling Spring. There would never be another beginning. There was now only going on.

KATE M. TUCKER

THE CONTRACT

We hed er contract, me an' him
Tu plant er garding; jess th' two o' us,
Tu keep ut harrowed, an' at weedin' made
Tu turn, an' turn erbout each day,
Furst him, yu see, then me.

Th' furst day out, my brother Jim,
He sed he'd weed, jess fer th' fun o' it,
He tuk my tools, an' broke th' gol-durned spade.
Nex' day
Ut wur my turn, thet wur th' way
He figgered' it, but I be
Not quite so foolish es he thought me.

So nex' sunup, I jess lay down an' slep',
My, I wur tuckered out with thinkin' on ut,
An' he lay on his belly in th' marsh,
Peekin' through bushes at me sleepin' thar.
Now wurn't he the stingy character
Tu greed
Like thet. Each day he crep'
Up tu the marsh's aidge an' slep',
An' I slep' tu,
Each waitin' fer our rightful turn, wud yu
Wurk out yor turn, ef yu wur me. Taint fair.

Thout our wurk th' blame ol' garding grew
Er hell o' er crop
O' weed.

H. PHELPS PUTNAM

BALLAD OF A STRANGE THING

1.

HIS name was Chance, Jack Chance, he said
And that his family was dead.
He was a lucid fool, his eyes
Were cool and he beyond surprise.
Into the township Pollard Mill
He came in autumn alone one day,
Loafing along those roads which still,
Though dying in the grass, report
That lumber-sledges went that way.
He came idly and in our town
He raised a flight of birds, a brown
And silver flock, and underneath
Their wings were tinged with gold; his breath
Blew and the birds dipped and rose
As if they surely lived which were
But lies of the calm sorcerer.

Autumn came bringing free
Melancholy, but to me
Brought Jack, when I was sitting there
In the open barn door-way where
The sun moved in and I could get
Drifting by the sound and smell
Of late bees and of mignonette
From the dying garden by the wall,
And hear the thin defeated bell
Of distant time, and see the tall
Elms beyond the orchard slopes
Rising improbably, like hopes
Swaying above the mind, and I
Was sitting there and he came by.

Under his hat I saw his eyes
Measuring without disguise
The ripeness of my house,
And measuring myself, and he
Turned in and approached and spoke to me.
He had decided undismayed
This was the place for Chance, and I
The boy for him; and so he stayed.

And then the days moved gravely by,
Time drowned in fluent clarity
Flowing between him and me,
Who only lay along the walls
Unshamed of indolence, and heard
The dusty harvesters' harsh calls
To sweating teams, loading the sheaves
On the steep withered fields—their care
Was none of ours; or reasoned there
Where the mill-pond burned with leaves
And rustled at the dam, on those
Stark thoughts that rose
Out of cool spoken words, or we
Loafing in the arbor ate
Slowly the warm grapes, the rusty
Creaking swallows skimmed
The long ridgepoles, the day grew late
Easily, and dimmed.

At night we made a fire to mark
A spot of mirth against the dark,
There in a pasture which lay high
On the nearness of the sky.
Other countrymen would come,
Young farmers, farmers' men and sons,
One after one they learned to come
And laugh with Chance and tap the old
Keg of cider, acrid gold,
Which we had borne carefully
Out of the cellar where it lay,

Drowsing wickedly it lay,
Waiting for us to set free
Its vigour and its treachery.
Then Jack would sing his bawdy songs:
That old ballad which belongs
To timelessness, *The Bastard King*,
Or *Doctor Tanner*, or *Mademoiselle*,
Or *Lil* who died of lechering.
She died with her boots on, as they tell,
With a champion lad between her knees.
Or he would sometimes please,
If drinking brought delusion near,
To tell corrosive tales, the mere
Garments of lies, the cunning kind
Which echo somewhat in the mind,
And then they go, and you are more
Dull and baffled than before.

There went by then, in such a way,
Serene October; the last day
Came and the night was newly cold,
But the fire was high and the old
Cider burned within and we,
A dozen foolish farmers, kept
Alive the late hilarity
Of autumn, and the township slept.
Then Chance arose from where he sat
Against the keg and cocked his hat
Sideways and walking slow around
The fire, said—"I have always found
Nothing new among much change;
But this I tell you now is strange—

2.

It was at noon, the hour of sleep
For those who use their nights
In the deluding piracy
Of shadowy delights.

And so I slept, above the bank
Above the River Still,
Under an oak, the least of two
That rose under the hill.

But a sound crept through my nerves
And I woke and I could hear
Feet running fast and close,
Down the hill and near,

Then stop; and heard a noise like sobs
And stood up quietly
And peering saw that a breathless girl
Was clutching the other tree.

And then a man came following,
Loping leisurely,
And when he stood beside her said,
"I knew you would wait for me."

And then she turned at bay; she was
Astonishingly rare,
A young ascetic fury she
Was something almost strange to me
With her honey fallen hair.

"Yes—and have waited even too long,
Before now, to be glad,
Watching your insolence too long—
Oh, you were the gorgeous lad
With your dark lovely face and all
The women you have had.

I have seen the rabbits follow you
Unasked and eagerly;
O, ladies, you should see him now,
Begging a kiss of me."

She ceased, and we all three were still
While he admired her,

And I kept hidden watching them,
For I have that character.

He did not mock her when he spoke,
"Where do they get these dull
Flash melodramas in their skulls?
And such a dainty skull.

Listen, I keep no list of names
For vanity; and I
Dislike the names and the odors and ways
Of women; I am shy
Of their domestic wills; and I
Am tired of the melting lie.

But there you are—and sometimes love
Is more than remembered skill."
"Love," she said, "is the rust which ate
The clean rancour of my will."

He raised his quiet hand to touch
Her hair, but she
Turned sharply down the bank and he
Now followed instantly.

And there below the godly stream
Was whispering in its beard,
And she cried, "Save me, River Still!"
Then stepped and disappeared.

Well—so far nothing strange;
But after that the queer
Began, and I have seen these things,
And I, the bastard son of change,
Would dare to call them queer.

I saw the girl had gone entirely,
And in her place a dry
Shivering graceful sheaf of reeds
Sprang up, suddenly high;

And that he, following so close
That her hair was in his face,
Clutched and had no girl but had
Sharp reeds in his embrace.

He stepped back, looking at his hands
All laced with blood; a spike
Broke short and stood between his ribs
Most murderous like.

This feller was not eager now,
But only dazed,
And pulled the wet spike from his side,
Fumbling and amazed.

He stooped slowly to bathe his hands,
Then from his pocket drew
A folded knife and cut one reed,
Murmuring, "This will do.

Sometimes there's music in these girls,
Sometimes," and sitting then
He made a whistle which he tried
And changed and tried again.

He blew five even notes and stopped,
But the sound rippled away
Slowly, as if a sweet clang came
From the leaves and hummed away.

And then there came along the bank
A black majestic goat
With yellow eyes and gilded horns
And a white beard at its throat.

The goat lay down before his feet
Respectfully, dipping its head,
And the man laughed and, "Can this be
A messenger?" he said.

And played again and now more wild
And cloudily intricate,
And the goat arose and danced like one
Hieratic and sedate.

3.

—And that is all,' said Chance, and then
He said, 'So long,' and walked away
Casually, as if the night were day,
And we jumped up calling, and then
Stood silent for over us coldly fell
Five piercing notes, each like a spark;
We stood there stiffly and immersed,
Hearing laughter in the dark,
Until I spoke, being the first,
'We had better go home now to bed,
'We have drunk too much,' I said.

Thereafter the rains beat down
The autumn, the drenched leaves came down
From the black trees, choking the ditches,
And over the sea came sons-of-bitches
With a hollow quarrel, the talking rats
Of England and of Europe slithered
Down the hawsers, doffed their hats
And squealed; and the plague spread and came,
Taking the cleanly name
Of honor for its strange device,
Even to our town; the conscript lice
Played soldiers over Pollard Mill
And pitched their camp on the River Still;
But no more Jack, and we were more
Dull and baffled than before.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

THREE FENNELVILLE STORIES

MISTRESS POLLY

SHATTERING oak leaves covered the churchyard ankle deep and as the still band moved toward the cemetery with a black object crowned with flowers in their midst they hissed regularly. "Dead, dead, dead," Plumley Jones heard them say at each slow movement of his feet, singing Polly's funeral song to the accompaniment of sougning winds. He shivered a little as he stepped slowly behind the black box to the excavation in the red earth.

There was a halt and Plumley heard the preacher saying something. "Raised in incorruption." Solemn words of hope from a good scholar. He thought of the tale of Paradise, that last place for souls more lastingly clad than in flesh, where music more precious than the frame of the harps beat away stillness all day long. Tuneless Polly would hardly be happy there, she would wreck any choir, unless her missing aptitudes were furnished, but a tuneful Polly would not be the woman he had lived with so long. . . . This was heaven. Looking at the mound rising with click of spades he hated to imagine her in another place. She was too good for that.

The crowd was singing her favorite hymn now, breasts rising and falling, voices trailing out of time and tune. Someone was deafening his right ear and he couldn't move for the close hemming crowd. He noticed several children examining his face for signs of that thing sorrow which had not yet been revealed to them in their own lives. Their clear straight gaze troubled him and he fixed his eyes on the red soil in which he stood. Fingering his chin with shaky hand across the grave he saw Bob Nichols shedding the tears he felt should have been his. Bob must be thinking of the days when he unsuccessfully courted the woman now

in dark silence. He resented this fellow's usurpation of chief mourner's place.

There was a stir at the end of the service. The preacher was holding his hand and saying something about comfort, hope. Others dressed in the fashions of a few separate decades came with offering of sympathy.

If Polly could have seen herself the attraction for so large a crowd she would have been proud. The farmers and their families, independent, stark of stride from following the plow, bent earthward to the medium they moved and thought in; the lastleg aristocracy with their lastly airs; some lawyers who had assisted Plumley in his three divorces; all were there. Among them moved the sly footed undertaker, pale and dainty. And behind the whites, negroes clumped, garbed in the castoff clothing of their pale brothers, watching the proceedings with eager eyes. Red skirt pink blouse and blue hat and other garish combinations were to be seen, but the display of color was not gaudy as they wore them. They hinted at a barbarism in which such color arrangements were as natural as devil dances and weird pantheons.

A large man shouldered to where he stood, Bob Nichols, his unfittable body draped in a mingled gray suit. Bob was getting old, Plumley thought with pleasure.

"Boy," he said sentimentally, casting a heavy arm over the widower's thin shoulder, "I never thought to see this day, Polly an old woman and dead." He gasped the last word incredulously. "I see her now as fifty, maybe, years ago. It was in the April orchard, the time when bees come from their hollow trees. I had seen her from the field where I was plowing father's corn land. I wrapped the line about the plow handle, stuck the point deep in the soil and hurried across to where she was." Bob was the same silly cuss as ever, Plumley saw. Yet he might pity the fat thing, he looked so soft and mushy. . . . "She had on a blue and white calico or gingham," Bob droned, thick lips curving downward like those of a baby trying to cry. "She put down the pole with which she was twisting caterpillars from a tree, pulled off a glove made out of the end of a sock, and

give me her little hand. I told her, all. She said her say. I stumbled back to work." His face calmed. "But I can almost feel her hand in mine now," he continued looking fondly at his big paw. "Memories, memories. . . ."

"And you married her four times," he resumed enviously. "How did you do it?"

"Well, I dunno. I guess we was made for each other." Plumley walked away leaving his friend to ponder the mystery of affinities.

When the crowd dispersed Plumley went to the bump of earth, pulled a rose from a big wreath and drove home slowly in the unstirred November evening.

He had never known how chill a place his house was. Silence in cellar and garret that not even a mouse nibbled at. In the disordered bedroom he made a bright fire and sat munching bread topped with hard little chunks of butter and looked about for something for his mind to rest on. There on the door hung Polly's cloak stiff and bulging with impress of her form. On the sewing machine a partly finished apron of checked stuff lay, pins stuck in the hems. On the bedpost a red cotton bag in which a lump of combings were collected to have made into a switch to supplement her scanty hair. The arrangements of the objects in the room showed her hand, no one but a woman could have packed so much furniture in one place without preventing exit and entrance.

He went out to the detached kitchen for water and was forced to recall this was Polly's workshop. Without shutting his eyes he could see her kneading a big gob of dough on the yellow pine board, making much noise at her work, her skirts as they rose and fell showing broad legs cased in knit worsted stockings. In the corner the churn stood full of thick milk, he felt the greasy dasher and found it tight, another piece of business he would have to attend tomorrow. As he turned to leave a light patter reminded him of lurking cats, waiting till he was gone to feast on the ham bone slung on a split by the door. Putting the lamp on the floor he spied a kitten running off, caught him by the soft skin of his neck and dropped him out in the dark.

The dreariness of the house and the night in which low winds complained of the fate driving them about the earth without pause or rest. He had the first impulse to reading in years and put out his hand to the dusty Bible, read a few heavy sentences and put it aside. Polly was better at reading than he. He was poor indeed at that game.

He pulled off his unaccustomed cravat and lay back gently rocking in his chair, thinking of the sum of his life.

Four honeymoons and three divorces. That was a notable record. Few men could claim so much experience in one short life. Most had to be content with one honeymoon and years years years of peace or noise. But the odd, the unique fact was that he married the same woman each time. . . . He smiled at the beauty of the thing. And Polly—she was hot tempered, or what was she?

That first great quarrel and its consequences. He asked Polly why she wouldn't have a child, believing it was laziness or something equally voluntary that kept his house silent of new growth. The subject had flown back and forth, gathering about it sonorous medical terms learnt of patent medicine folders. "Haven't I took Woman's Friend, two bottles of it, and Perkin's Compound? You ort to see to yourself." Finally all words were exhausted, "I'll get a divorce," she shouted and was true to her threat.

Then he grew lonesome and went courting as though they counted eighteen years and not, thirty-five wasn't it? And the marriage, actually with bridesmaids, and the honeymoon to Norfolk on a boat, almost as happy a trip as their first married journey. He recalled how he hired a tiny boat and took Polly sailing up the bay, the blue waters reaching up at them greedily, she screeching like a guinea as the waves came higher, higher and split against the boat. He laughed at the vision.

Peace then had come, had gathered thickly for five years wherein the little farm was being spruced up mid the round of chickens turkeys corn tobacco potatoes. Five years of one texture and then Polly broke the mesh and fled. The fuss this time being over a bantam rooster she swore was ruining her poultry and Plumley swore as firmly wasn't.

Alleging cruelty she obtained her decree and settled tentatively at her father's house, where her parents received her with shakes of the head, suspecting a crack had sprung in their daughter's brain. And after due pause her quondam husband came, made away with the cause of disagreement by eating the bantam rooster and cajoled her into a Mrs again by promise of a most splendiferous journey. After which trip to the Great Lakes, with a sigh of contentment that was half remorse at the closing of a pleasant episode, Polly fell once again into the ways of her mothers, cooking, cleaning, sewing, fussing around a bit in an off-hand manner and wondering at the twinges of monotony that goaded her in sunny weather.

Last, at sixty, she turned rebel as before, rushing off in the impetuous grand style of a girl of sixteen. She went to law and unopposed got her decree from the weary aged judge who had heard all her cases. Plumley was not very much dismayed, he had almost grown accustomed to the strange creature's madness.

And then came his hardest task, winning her back to her work and his bed. The white hairs that long ago had replaced the brown made her the more exacting. She demanded much sentiment of him, wanted him to sing to her beneath her window that she might fling kisses to him from rheumatic fingers, and he had to submit after much protestation to the indignity of croaking, with his head half wrapped in a wool shawl to keep off the dew, Annie Laurie and Ben Bolt one moonlight night while she shook white hair at him and flung him a loud cold kiss. The owls by the river stopped hooting to hear him sing, the crickets went dumb. The dog in the yard howled at the end of his serenade and he heard Polly's mother laugh once as if someone were tickling her ribs. And looking up he saw Polly's face full of gray shadows, eyes closed on the scene before her to imagine another.

Plumley went home that night in real anxiety, divided between apprehension of being heard howling like a hoarse cat and real fear that Polly had lost her mind.

Nor was this all; when he went again to the quiet old house

where only Polly's mother lived attended in her extreme age by a negro woman, he had actually to get on his knees to a petticoat! Which was the second time he ever was on his knees to a human being, the first instance being when he was forced upon them by a man at midnight carrying a gun and a booty bag.

After which sublime act he was allowed to measure her waist and kiss her downy cheek. . . . O Lord. The contrary woman she was. He smiled under his white moustache. He hadn't felt any ecstasy over these things, of course not. It was necessary to have her in the house. If he married some other woman there'd still be alimony to Polly and he couldn't stand that. But how different had been their first marriage. He just got her in a corner at a country dance, smacked his lips on hers, felt her flush under his pressure and named the date. That was the way to do the thing, if one were handsome and well-off and strong of mind.

He straightened his back to stir the simmering fire. It had sunk to a little heap of coals in a nest of ashes.

The last honeymoon like most last things was the silliest of all. He took the woman to Florida that time, where she fished, danced, and ran around like a colt. And that trip had cost something, too. . . . Well, it was worth the money but he never got over the shock to his vanity that affair had been. The hotel clerks joked aloud as they passed in the throngs of fashionable folk, calling them Grandma Juliet and Grandad Romeo. He didn't know what that meant but he was sure it was something ugly.

Would the woman have sprung more of these surprises had she lived? She said to him just before she died, between a smile and silence at sunset, "I'd sorter counted on being divorced agin." He rubbed the short growth on his chin and thought, Why in the name of Common Sense had the woman behaved so? The light quarrels they had were hardly sufficient cause for her mania. She had just overflowed periodically. No, there were no periods to her distemper. Maybe there was, what was it called? romance in her blood. He didn't quite understand the word so he couldn't decide. She liked to travel about and charge her memory with new

scenes. The rearing hills with coiffure of pines and the little mountain prostrate before the west were not enough.

"Ain't you goin to let me in?" some one petulantly demanded at the door, shaking the lock steadily.

Sure enough there was somebody at the door. It was Bob Nichols who came puffing in like a March wind almost roared out and wheezing away before unexpected cool north blasts.

"I'm goin back to Hanover tomorrow," he explained, standing awkwardly in the doorway, blotting all image of the starry night with his broad form. "I thought to see you before I left. It has been years since I was here."

Plumley beckoned him to a chair and subsided into his abandoned pose without further display of hospitality.

Bob glanced slowly about the room in which he had not trod—for how long? about forty-nine years, or more. None of the articles in the chamber were familiar to him except the brown walnut sewing table with glass knobs at which Polly sat many a time when he shyly came to court. This old house had been her father's but when she married Plumley bought a bit of a place nearby to live their lovely new life in for a year. He did not like the idea of two families living together, he knew how easy it was to fall out over small things. And before the first year passed Polly's parents decided to move into the small house and give up the larger one to their daughter.

Nichols passed a gnarled palm over his bald head decorated above each ear with a tuft of wire-like hair. His big round skull was a bare dome with two little patches of shrubbery at timber line. The host's brooding silence made him nervous. Bethinking himself of his watch he drew in his breath and pulled it out, fixing his myopic eyes in rotation on the gilded dial. He breathed ponderously, the wicker chair creaked as his abdomen swelled and sank.

Bob licked his lips and enquired with effort,

"Plum, man, how do you feel?"

"I," Plumley hesitated, "I don't feel as spry as I might."

"Do you think you ought to feel spry?" It was a shocking word.

"Well why shouldn't I? I ain't sick that I knows of. A man can't feel kiddish all the time."

Bob made no reply, he was an inexperienced bachelor and could not manage to say the right thing to one who had enjoyed and took his honors easily. Perhaps Plum was putting away thought of the dead woman—no, girl it was—and was not callous as he seemed.

The fire discovered a chip and lighted the velvet mouth of the chimney, in the blue radiance Bob's eye was caught by the voluminous gray cloak hanging stiffly on the door like a human figure stuck up to dry.

"Whose coat is that?" he asked, to make conversation.

"That," there was a meaning pause, "that were Polly's."

"Polly's!" The exclamation was spontaneous. Why she would get lost in the monstrous garment. She was like a stalk of sweet corn, was Polly. Ah there it was. He forgot how the years had piled up change on the slim ideal to which his faith had clung. But Polly stout . . . well it wasn't more remarkable than Bob grown old and fat.

"Was she so large?"

"Who? She? Yes. Very large." He drawled the last word. Bob was fond as ever of nice expressions. "She was a big woman, made three of me, I guess. Why, she got so fat her stomach took up six inches of her skirt in front and made her petticoat drag behind.' He smiled at the picture rising to his eyes, of a tall stout woman standing with arms stuck out at the elbows, the top of her shoes visible in front against a drop of blue underskirts that rippled at her heels. But the image evoked had no effect on Bob other than to enforce that earlier figure. He could not think of her but as a twenty year girl with calmly upright head and eyes that gave brown glances that took in your soul, light of step, sinuous of stride and lovely as the first blooms of jimson weeds that open out their trumpets in the green height of summer.

"There is an enlarged picture of her in the parlor, made last year," he resumed. "Want to see it?"

"No." He shifted the subject quickly. "How's business with you, Plum?"

"Fair." He paused to calculate aloud. "You may think I'm lyin but my weddin trips come to nine hundred dollars." He watched for the other's surprise, repeating in slow awed tones, "nine hundred dollars."

"So?" Bob did not know what remark to throw across the silence. "Well, you don't regret the cost, do you?"

"C'n't say I do, but ain't it foolish to think of?"

The question went without answer. The clock clucked out time like a croupy hen. Wind hummed under the outer door, explored the keyhole and found a whistle, played on it a while and went galloping over the roof.

The men sat without movement and the firelight settled in the folds of their skin, while their eyes, half closed against the glare, saw in the center of flame different visions: Bob the maiden in spring: Plumley the matron in winter.

Rather odd, Bob coming to see him now, Plumley thought. He supposed he should appreciate the visit but somehow he didn't. . . . Bob was always a funny chap, since he was a kid. He used to read poetry aloud in a s-singy voice something like a lonely cat's attempt at music. At the public school where they received their education he recited sentimental things about eyes and moonlight and ships sinking and mountains on fire that everybody but his mother and the teacher thought confounded silly. He, Plum Jones, when called on to say a piece at school breaking up, was wont to recite in swift defiant tones, "I had a little mule and his name was Jack, I put him in the stable and he jumped through the crack."

Which was mannish, sensible and brought applause from every hearer but teacher and Bob's mother. This was not his only poem, however, there were several other nice ones he learned for occasions like this. Now such pieces were real poetry, they were funny, had a joke in them that anybody could see and poetry had to be funny and brief and wise. Benjamin Franklin was the great American poet because he knew this. But them things like Hamlet's mouthful about needles and bodkins and arrows made you feel uneasy and was altogether unpleasant. Which naturally was not poetry. Poetry was a light sort of tea cake to be eaten with lemonade between real meals.

Plumley's tobacco color lips parted with laughter over his thoughts.

"I say, Bob, do you still read poetry like you used to?"

"I do," the acknowledgment came a bit sheepishly. "I ain't educated, I don't understand lots in it but I like it. It gives something better than me." He heard a cynical chuckle. "You know I never had what I wanted," he continued morosely. "Nothing I wanted, my life is like a shell the snail has left, empty and always makin a windy fuss, thinkin it is the sea."

The other turned a gleam of yellow teeth.

"Nothin? Ain't you got lands, money an—," he moved his fingers to signify that therein was all matter of human desire.

"True. But that ain't nothin to be proud of. A stuffed owl is got his feathers and claws and glass eyes, ain't he? Then he should be happy. But mind he ain't got no organs, nothin but some brand of maybe straw, no wings to skoot about on."

Plumley scrutinised the fat form to find the aptness of the illustration. Bob looked quite firm flesh. Plague take the fellow, he was getting sentimental again.

"I don't see that. You never married, true, but why didn't you?"

"Polly," he said briefly, big eyes glittering.

The widower struggled with his dignity for a minute, inclined at once to laughter and to anger.

"Man you could have got a gal anywhere."

"Not for me. I couldn't try."

"An you was faithful to that first love?" he queried with amusement.

"I never loved another," Bob said blushing. He left his chair and moved ponderously over to the sewing table.

There were several drawers to the affair and seizing the shiny knobs he pulled them open one by one, looking stupidly at rows of spools, needles and button cards. His hands trembled on the blackened wood, across the table he saw a straight stare, a throat on which no beads hung, smelt lilacs just as on that day he got a pair of scissors for her to clip the strings of a frayed sunbonnet. Once too he brought

Miles Standish and resting the book on this same table read it aloud in a stumbling fashion that the real desire to interpret excused. She liked the book very much and thanked him with that lovely lift of the chin. She was no good at reading but he made things so plain the way he spoke the piece.

He shut the drawers with comically sad air and reseated himself. His host rocked slowly, hairy hands lapsed on the chair arms, brownish hair spotted gray thrown about on his head as if it did not belong to him but had got accidentally stuck there for a time.

"An so you didn't marry because of Polly?" Plumley asked with enjoyment.

"As I said. I felt there was nobody else for me. Once, after your first divorce I thought I was going to have a chance after all."

The man on the other side of the hearth thought the remark impertinent. He glared at his unconscious guest.

"A swell chance you had," he sneered.

"When a woman's divorced she's free as an unmarried girl," Bob reasoned.

"Don't fool yourself that way. It might be so of others but Polly wouldn't er dared marry anybody but me."

"What's that? Was that true of the first divorce?"

"Sure." He thought before going on. "An I wouldn't er married nobody else. We cooled off between spells and was better pleased afterward."

"I do not understand," Bob said distinctly, shaking his fat jowls. "Polly never was bad tempered. She was meek and gentle when I knew her."

"Well, she changed then."

It was all a mystery to Bob. Divorce meant irreconcilable differences. Here was another dream gone. He need not worry about his failure to try for Polly.

"I have never had what I wanted and never will," he repeated. "I'm almost rich but I'm old. I was timid once but now that I need no courage but the little to take me to a peaceful end I have enough, not a lion's courage but enough."

As though nothing had been said Plumley rocked softly but he chuckled in his moustache. P. Jones had nothing to complain of, he had his hours to count in comfort, his life was full of honeymoons and court practice. He was not an empty man like the one he had been listening to.

He did not like this fellow Nichols. His friendship for him was too lapsed to stand much strain. Anyway, as he had hectored Bob in his youth he enjoyed watching his maudlin old age.

The object of his delight had risen to fumble about the old walnut table again. Here, Bob imagined, she sat many times, her hand just where his lay. But not a slim smooth hand, a hand slow, stiff. Not brown hair pinned up in blowsy masses bending over the blackish wood but a white twist curled in a close knot. Yet on the lift of his old dreamy eyes she stood above time.

His inagile fingers rummaging in the drawers felt a sort of communication with mystery. Turning up scraps of ribbon, undarned hose and so on, at the very bottom he came upon a little packet in faded yellow wrapper. Toying with it he curiously slipped aside the string to see an ochre envelope scrawled over in a large rambling hand. "Miss Polly Robertson," he read. The postmark was illegible but the superscription, plain yet faded, was like a ghost half flesh.

He could hardly forget that he had written to Polly once and how long he had worked over that letter to accomplish the gigantic task of spelling correctly. To which there had been no reply, she only thanked him later and said she did not reply because she was not good at writing. This was before the final meeting in the orchard, an event that intensified Bob's rather romantic nature. He wondered many times what she thought of that letter, probably as a formal gesture of youthful friendship, a convention merely. But he never saw that, he only absurdly wondered.

Walking back to the fire thoughts came to him out of the past. The dreams gaudy intangible, fierce physical, the hours stolen from sleep to lavish on this little letter, a bait thrown out to bring in the fish. The mystery of that youth we manage to live through like a prolonged sickness to arrive

at last at a condition of solemn immunity. The exaggerations of that time, the veil of illusion through which flesh is seen, the male and female throwing out bridges of poetry for passion to tread.

Chewing a big quid of tobacco he tremblingly opened the envelope. The man across the hearth seemed to doze, flat feet pressed into the pile of the rug, lips still and curled in a tight smile. His desiccated face yellow as a leaf of burley tobacco had a close deathlike appearance and Bob held his breath once to hear him snore.

"Dear Polly,

I am not much at writing and had rather talk but I can tell you shorter this way. I want you to marry me. And I want nothing more. I don't know how you feel about me but this is how I feel.

It is this way. Things is empty when you are not near, like a sky without a sun. I feel more than that, though. I would have to be somebody else to tell you all I feel. I love you. I hope that will say all I can't tell you.

I think we would get on all right. We will take a trip north and come back in April like two swallows.

Loving Bob.

March 3, 1871."

It was exciting to know she kept this letter and read it many times, its edges showed use. His body shook to think the reason for its preservation. She had no doubt been engaged to Plumley when he had written and found herself bound by her word. He looked at the stupid fellow across the hearth in sudden wrath. The dull, stony, fortunate creature.

Bob's glowing eyes waked the sleeper.

"Still thinkin, Bob?" he asked maliciously. "What 'bout?"

"Nothin," he answered hoarsely, "I think of nothin."

But he was thinking, What does the secreted letter mean? And the answer was swift. The dead woman had loved him and gone on doing so in her old age.

Perhaps, as he could not see, the keeping of the letter was but a trait of her romanticism? Bob's letter may have

been her only one from a lover and was treasured as a trophy of the time when she was young and virgin. Maids preserve love letters until the womb ripens and new loves come with new tyrannies, when they get relegated to attics, amorous tidbits for rats and moths, to be finally cast out in some spring cleaning. But Polly had no children, no scribbling lovers. Except Bob's one attempt at loquacity nothing to feed an inner longing for worship?

Or she might have kept the letter as a joke to read Plumley and it was found too comic to throw away. This idea passed him like a gull in a wind and he saw it no more.

And he could reason of none of these things. No, the meaning was plain.

His heart grew like a sunflower with the thought. She had loved him all her poor life, him, not the thing she had married. Plumley, a smug conceited ass, had simply lived with his wife, for if her heart was his was not that complete divorcement of the sallow, sneering man? What a fool he was not to have rushed in after the first divorce and claimed her, she had made these moves to give him a chance. . . . God, it was killing to think of.

Catching up his hat Bob Nichols went out in the dark without a word of farewell. The sky was dark, unlit with the wink of a single star. Great clouds lay oppressively overhead, on a level with his eyes, everywhere: he could almost feel them they bulged so close over the earth. All was darkness, mystery, like his life, like Polly's, like that other man's that had stood between him and light to this dusky end.

Plumley grew aware by the empty silence of his chamber that his guest had gone. A queer chap, that fellow Nichols, always that way. He wondered whether he should have told him that Polly asked that word of her death be sent him in her name. Probably the silly cuss could have sucked some sentiment out of that.

DELL'S HOUSE

"LET's stop," she said and rubbed the ochre smudge from the palms of her hands with a wisp of purple grass. "We can finish tomorrow. Let's go home and sit on the porch, think of ourselves a little and eat something cold from the safe." Robert dropped his basket but continued looking at the ruddied rows where the fruit lay on the gray soil ready for picking. "You can read me the fifth chapter of the study of rural conditions you haven't worked on so long. And then we can read Balzac some, or write to our friends." She lifted her slightly bowed shoulders with animation.

"You have a program to keep us going for a week," Robert objected. "If the fruit isn't gathered now it won't be ready to market tomorrow, and it will hardly stand, safely, another day."

They resumed their baskets. On the brittle clods their feet, shod in discolored leather, made heavy crunching noises as they went slowly up the rows, filling the baskets and getting empty ones at intervals. The horses hitched to the red wheeled wagon at the far end of the field stomped and shook from their manes the swarms of flies gathering at this late evening hour. Some large tan hogs walked by the fence of the stable lot looking for weak spots in the wire through which to escape into the field whence came enticing odors of over ripe fruit. Their fat bodies stirred clouds of yellow pollen from goldenrod masses clumped by the edge of the lot. Mingling with their heavy voices, repetitious and beastly, the faint cries of partridges, of sparrows and crickets made a chorus at once gloomy and cheerful. However bright the birds sounded their songs were dominated by the desolate grunting of the hogs.

"Only a few baskets more," Dell said with relief after nearly an hour of silence.

"Yes. We are late, though. Don't you think you'd better get on to the house and prepare some supper?" He lifted his almost shapeless hat from which streams of sweat issued, though the evening was cool. With an anxious glance he estimated the quantity of salable material on the field.

"We'll have cold lunch," Dell answered and walked on with her basket, now full and bending her at the waist. "There's cabbage and potatoes left from dinner."

Robert nodded abstractedly. He looked overhead at the purple and green sky above the lurid setting sun. The night hawks, or bulbats as they were locally called, made circles in the air or dropped straight down to dart off from the earth like erratic comets. Over the long broad rows on which watermelon vines spread with a few last melons attached to drying runners a black snake moved gracefully preceded by an excited frog. Robert turned with interest to see the result of the chase, but both creatures disappeared in the ragweed between the rows.

"Poor thing. He's on the same round of life with us."

He moved quickly to see Dell pointing to the frog a few yards off already in the jaws of the snake. They laughed, scared the snake away from its victim and their day's work over, began to load the baskets on the wagon. Then unhitching the team they left the wagon to be hauled off tomorrow morning and went toward the white house just behind the apple trees.

Robert drew water to fill two basins. They cleaned their faces in silence. The sun, just above the dark pines, bathed in the bucket of slop by the well, brimmed with greasy water. Its surface did not splinter in the wind, nothing but a pair of apron strings moved on the line of human ornaments hung up to dry between the poultry houses. Dell threw her hair back and caught the eye of a turkey buzzard sailing deferentially on his delicate missions.

"This is the fifteenth!" she exclaimed, rubbing soap from her coarse red skin.

"The fifteenth?"

"Don't you remember? The Pryors are at mother's house in Philadelphia today."

"Oh yes. That conference of literary and artistic bugs," he said in half-hearted belittlement.

"You know you don't feel that way about it."

"Right. I don't feel at all." He threw the towel on the nail by the kitchen door.

In a few minutes the cold supper was ready and Robert

and Dell applied themselves to the cabbage, potatoes, biscuit and tomatoes with enthusiasm. They ate without thought of table etiquette, setting their elbows on either side of their plates, feeding with the speed of hunger. It was yet early enough to eat without lighting a lamp, a broad square of yellow coming through the window full on the table.

The faces of Robert and Dell, so dissimilar in contour, were surprisingly similar in expression, the result of that identical experience you can see in the poses, peculiarities and attitudes of almost any married couple. Dell's long and thin face; her overfull but well cut lips: her blue eyes, a palish blue and expressive of spiritual innocence: her straight tall figure that would have been pretty with a little more flesh and her reposed manner contrasted boldly with Robert's dumpy features, form and nervous movements. Dell, one guessed, was a practical person, but Robert's roving black eyes and frequently unintelligible reactions to beautiful events and ugly ones marked him a dreamer. But country life had made him seem a rank materialist, one in whom spirit was absent—though it was most subtly hidden. Long ago before he married Dell and was seized with an ailment of the lungs, his days had been spent in the office of a literary periodical: now he labored in the fields and appeared to take his hours of turning over manure in the stables as indifferently as those once dedicated to turning over reams of manuscript. From enthusiasm for his work in the city he had reached that stage of insouciance, brought on by hectic nights among diverting ladies, where any new thing is a relief.

And Dell, who always admired his mind and loved him personally came out of her place in an intelligent society to dig like a peasant and learn the secrets most female natives knew.

Robert fidgeted with his cup, sure witness to Dell that a crisis was drawing near in his mind. He was thinking of the other life suggested to his memory in the talk in the tomato field, perhaps. The evils of his late life had receded to a tinted vision, for the once. He laid down his last potato and went out.

Night came without premonitory twilight. The first he

knew of it was the chickens stepping demurely up the ladder to the black hole in the end of the henhouse. In the first gathering of the stars the asters dulled in the midst of somber green and over their peaks grew a wide yellow blossom, the half-globe of Fennelville's distant lights. In the faint petals there was a beckon, a portent, a call to board trains moving out several times daily north, south, east, west. From the little town wheels rumbled you out to a place of adventures: there was the ocean waiting for who had golden wings or iron hand. . . . He dropped his hand on the sack of cool potatoes lying on the porch—roots from the earth round and firm, with a heavy scent of manure, the special scent of nature.

The dark congenially collected over the man and the objects on the long narrow porch. His mind went out on a journey up the warm river of fancy—a stream moving on a bed of memory between banks of desire. There were niches with little images, caverns without a light. . . . On his return to consciousness he was aware of the potatoes, they had made dents in his arm.

Dell sat in the house unlacing her stiff and dusty shoes. Her eyes vacantly watched the clock, like a contented cat her mouth spread in an immense yawn that seemed to swallow her features. She unsnapped her rusty stays, threw them over the chair like a piece of horse harness and with a single movement of her arm deftly opened the bed.

"Robert," she called. "Come on to bed. Got to rest. Canning tomorrow." Her voice faded sleepily. When he came in after removing his shoes on the porch she was asleep, one hand thrown across her shallow breasts showing the little winking light of her engagement ring. Robert stripped off his trousers and extinguished the lamp with a forceful puff. He lay beside Dell thinking no rest would come over him, after the apparition of remembered things, the towns and trains, the cafés and homes out in the social existence he once led, but he had discovered exhaustion during the September hours. "I will rest until the hour," he muttered mysteriously. . . . Once he turned to see that further portions of the sky disc had moved up with the moon nailed there over some old stars. He had a half-sensible

glimpse of the sooty landscape under a thin illumination, of trees, hills, and houses stretching across to the blue-black earth rim in slowly fluid waves. When he dropped his head on the pillow he felt Dell's hair about his ears and roused again into full consciousness.

And he thought of Dell's hair. Once, a long age ago it must have been, he laid his fingers on the delicate brown fulness and tears came to his eyes. Really, as he considered backward he saw he had married her because of her superb hair. All the softness, the glamor, the perfumed pride of the world came under his rule while he fleetingly caressed the piled up strands. The mystery of the feminine, such as Helen of Troy possessed to stir a war that was almost sacred since it waged around the divine idea: the subject of romances, of heroisms, of dreams and insight which is poetry—he knew and observed them all in the ineffable little period of time. Could he ever regain such full sensation of perfection? Probably it was one of those lost moments stored away to sound, as now, in the dark stillness.

Robert rose in his blue shirt and made a light. A night wind was stirring through the room, blowing in tiny insects that collected about the lamp shortly after he set it on the sewing machine. His chair, a wide oak leather covered object under the window, invited him. He drew a quilt over his knees and leant his head on the stuffed back.

The first object he noted was Dell's hands, coarse, thick skinned, angular, without those soft lines such as they had in New York when she came up to see him in his workshop. However it was not only to her hands a change had come. The curves of her face were gone and over her forehead, where she once wore a band of well kept hair brushed down to join the thick mass above her cheek, was lined and marked. This was what country life had done. The city? The old line of brain work? Of course there'd be work, but lovely streets of faces too. One loves a garden of flowers and vegetables planted by oneself. There is also a garden of beings planted by another. No daisied fields that please the eye but plague the farmer, but caves of troglodytes containing millions of varieties. . . . And here? A cat sauntering in

for a nap on the doorstep, Dell spreading tomatoes on the oil cloth table in front of rows of greenish cans washed and wearing red rubber circlets. On Sunday a late sleep, some reading and then Monday again. For diversion at evening they might look at the soft hills getting a fine green coat on against the summer heat. In August the field before the house had a top haze of corn tassels. In September it would be marked off by heavy shocks, tan and stately, drying out for November husking.

A habit of looking at the practical turned him from his complaining thoughts but not the less as he sat in the silence he felt as if a hump of years broke the straightness of his figure. However the night was not ended and things could happen.

Dell was waked by the steady glare of the lamp. Robert's sturdy figure looked like a petulant child's, brooding over some simple problem too complex for his mind to solve. The first Robert knew of her presence was a warm touch on his hand. She had seated herself on the arm of his chair.

"You see," she began, settling her body against him, "we two are not sufficient company for each other. We have the Baileys, the Kunderds. . . ."

"Mrs. Kunderd in sunbonnet of pink laying down universal laws!"

"That's her. But mustn't it be fine to feel omniscient? Then Gladys Kunderd. Do you know I love her for her little ambling walk and her figure like a humpty-dumpty. The child's eyes have changed, have you noticed?" She watched Robert's half-shut eyes attentively. "I think she's learning something of life."

"Surely you don't grudge me the pleasure I get from opening her mind. She was like a still pool but now she is like a stream, living, moving." He clasped Dell's knee. "You have seen she was beginning to do more than admire me? You are wrong. Anyway I shan't break her heart, but lead her to venerate me. Notice my patriarchal airs when she comes again." The laughter at the conclusion of his remark offended Dell so much she left the window.

"Robert," she walked over to the bed while speaking, "you

mustn't trust yourself too far. This has happened before and several times your adventures have ended sadly for yourself and others. Have you forgotten Delgado's restaurant and Delgado's daughter?"

Robert trembled with anger and pleasure. The things Dell's admonitions recalled upset the necessitous virtues he had cultivated in the solitude of the country.

"I'm quite an outlaw, am I not?"

"No. I don't think you are very much worse than numbers of mankind, but you are too ancient to behave badly now, aren't you? And you are my husband."

The clock sounded nine. . . . Across the open field, a hundred yards away, a single window in a tree framed cottage glowed steadily, another person keeping company with the night, mayhap a thinking person. He thought of himself all at once as very near to this person keeping tryst across the shade, that their perceptions were closely bound while others slumbered.

Robert looked over at Dell's straight figure lying under a dingy white counterpane. "She has no beauty of line, no suggestive undulations. Her body is not a mountain river but a brackish pool, flat, with no waves. Oh how dull her senses have become. How dull. . . ." Shifting his body he looked again into the night where shadows surrounded each object with infernal halos. In the bushes under the window crickets played incessantly a relentless nocturne and drop by drop the locust was shedding its green film.

A purple flowered curtain over a book case jerked in a wind puff, showing lines of gold inscription on rows of dark books. From his position he could distinguish some titles that thrilled him. In the curtain's nervous flutter he imagined he could perceive a silent call to the life he had abandoned. There they were, his old friends, dusty, uncared for, even hidden from his eyes, the builders of his mind discarded but undecayed.

Dell was asleep, one hand awkwardly strained against her pillow. "Sleep, that knits the raveled sleeve of care," he benignly murmured, drawing on his dusty pants with unusual quietness. He pulled his shirt over his head, buttoned

it carefully and taking up his shoes prepared to go out. His last acts in the room were placing his pillow in his place on the bed, close against Dell's knees, and puffing the lamp out. Outside Robert stepped on the plank by the door, avoiding the dew wet grass. He put his shoes on and strode out firmly across the yard, through the swaying gate and out into the newly ploughed tobacco field.

A land ordinary in all its properties, he reasoned as he went heavily through the stubble, but having a delicate glamor on a day of haze, as though the faint curtain interpolated between the pines and one's eyes were a scheme of earth to hide its harsh aspect. Like an ill favored woman screening an inescapable hideousness with powder, paint and simulated grace.

A few straggling trees hedged the dim-lit sky with slim branches. The naked field stretched in grayness to the darker road, its expanse given a little variety by the up-turned tobacco roots that lay like antlers under the light of the aging moon moving now across the sky without a bit of warmth. Robert buttoned his shirt cuffs and wished for a coat. To warm his chilly body he walked more swiftly toward the group of maples in a bottom between his tobacco field and the stable yard of his nearest neighbor. The spot where the trees arranged themselves in twos around the shallow spring was his objective, which as he neared he scanned attentively and slowed his stride. In the dusk of the setting was that a white object moving, or standing? He drew aside from the path into a clump of chinquapin to observe and postpone.

There she would be waiting. When he should finally advance toward the spring she would come to meet him with hand held straight out. Her round figure, a series of delicate curves, achieved expression in her soft small mouth that, when she smiled broke the secret of merriment on him, as if her smile were saved for him alone. After greeting him she would move with stately informality to the plank seat whither he would accompany her inevitably and as he followed he would notice, for the hundredth time, the very feminine lines of her bobbed hair that curled upward at the ends without

artifice and over her forehead was smoothly brushed down to one side. Then, when she spoke and he heard the mellow drawl of his name, she would become an exquisite entity, so accurately did her manner, her tone bear out the promise of her person. . . . He counted the reasons he could find for . . . loving her, while he waited for proof of her presence by the spring. Only once before had they met at night and that time he spoke to her of life as a spending of oneself for the joy and in the joy of one's lover.

In the recessed trees he saw a white movement, like a great moth seeking lily tubes. Over the north sky he was surprised by streaks of red, the snapping banners of the northern lights. The occurrence thrilled him by its coincidence with the opening of a new happy chapter in his chronicle. It had never been visible but once since he came here, and that on a dark November night when he was returning from Fennelville with some express parcels. The lights wavered about, reaching higher and higher, covering the stars with white and yellow bands and broad patches of dull red. The illusion of trumpets sounding filled his ears, and he had to think before he could convince himself that this pageant progressed without a whisper or a jar.

"The aurora again," someone remarked on the other side of the chinquapin.

Robert stepped out rather guiltily before the young girl, in pure white without a blot of color, waiting in the path a few yards from the spring bench.

"It is the second time I have seen it here." They shook hands briefly. "Did your radio show the disturbance?"

"I didn't tune in. I am tired of the music and voices that come horsed on the sightless couriers of the air. It's such an impersonal accompaniment to intimate thoughts."

In her small plump hands she carried a square object.

"This is your book," she offered it to him when they sat down. "You told me you were going to return to the city the twentieth—that's only five days off. I wanted you to have it when you packed up."

She held it out to him and in receiving it he jejunely touched her hand. The romantic light sifting on them

through the star punctured sky was not sufficiently intense for Robert to watch the familiar changes in the girl's expression. Dimmed gold filled the contours of her face: he could imagine her as a Rubens Venus with traces of Minerva in her eyes seated like this, an ivory statue, in a laurel circuite shrine. The white dress did not interfere with the vision, the thin stuff was moulded to her figure like the water soaked draperies of a Greek model. And shivering over the rich image of life at his side he asked, Is happiness also beauty?

"I am not going back to New York as I planned. I can be happy here. I shall stay here."

Gladys Kunderd stirred and gave a light cry. Whether of delight or sorrow he could not tell then. He supposed her feelings were a compound of fear with joy. She appeared helpless and her emotions had no screen.

"She . . . wouldn't go?" The question hardly reached his ear, so low was her speech.

"I didn't mention the project. I intended the proposal as a surprise. But all my reasons for going away have become reasons for staying."

"That's cryptic," she managed to drawl flippantly.

"You are leaving, for your school, are you not?" he asked evading her indirect request for information.

"I am not going." She faced him appealingly. He took her hands and felt them glowing. "I hardly think I would make a good teacher, I have never taught, though, and mother wants me at home. I thought—if you would continue kind—I would go on studying with your assistance this winter."

Continuing to hold her quiet hands he felt the joy of a sculptor before a statue of his modelling. The joy he once had in reading a poem under his own name in a magazine or a story he had created was his again. And when he viewed her and said, "You are more beautiful than the night" he was praising himself a little. It might have been part illusion for when he bent over and touched her mouth he knew she was finer than anything he had ever fashioned. Man's activities are descriptive and imitative of himself always: the

body of his life entrances him so he spends his best energies knitting fictions about his three dimensional reality, or interpreting his constant dreams.

They sat talking freely of their lives and hopes—at least the girl did. The man talked sincerely but not with complete freedom. The girl's personality had only a façade but the man's was broken with corridors, with unplotted entanglements.

The hours passed to midnight. The air had grown cooler, pools of mist were forming in the crowns of the bushes down the stream: no animate sound shattered the humid void: for a while the two on the seat had been silent and Gladys Kunderd walked to the spring a few feet away.

"I am different since I came out here," she said enthusiastically. She knelt by the spring. Robert saw her head disappear and heard the sound of water dripping from her face. "Do you secretly think me bad that I should talk as I have tonight to you?" She wiped her face, shaking back her disarranged hair. "You taught me to think. Was it odd that you taught me to love also, since love is intellectual as well as emotional? Really, love is not intellect, I suppose. It is the bond connecting all manifestations of life, you told me." She had picked some dark colored flower and was pulling it apart. She stood in front of her observant companion. "I love you and I ask nothing but that."

Robert trembled at the extravagance of youth. He was also slightly irritated by her facility, her belief in herself. She was like a young wild fowl perched on the edge of the nest: tonight she tested her flight powers before a journey of her own. The clear words of her surrender made him shudder, because he also had known the sufficient promises of life. But not far off there was an epilogue to be played. The remnants of his gentle blood rebelled. He clasped her hand quickly and turned off to his dark house on the hill.

It was not until in a wordless dream he left Gladys that he was aware of the wind, increased now to a gale. The wretched trees waved thin arms, as if to flag down the growing tempest. Whirling dust blew around him and tasted bitter on his lips. At the head of the ravine he glanced

keenly down the slope but only imagined he saw Gladys by the spring. Had she been there yet—dumb with surprise, perhaps, at his curt behavior—he could not have seen her.

Again he meditated why he lived so intensely in this girl's presence. On a common hill of broomstraw sometimes he stopped before a purple aster, a perfect blossom among the weeds. Then the hill was forgotten and in his mind the purple bloom sprang up, spread over the field until nothing could be seen beneath its glory.

He deviated from the short way home to pass through the tomato field. The wagon was a fine sight in the yellow light of the moon, it resembled a pile of newly cut beef. Strong scents of decay from the spoiled fruit left in the rows nauseated him. "This," he murmured, "is life? Is a tomato as much a creative act as a poem or a picture? We must all make something. Is it not menial to create for the belly that does not remember?" The questions were simple but they confused his subtle mind. "It depends on what we have about us to enjoy our gains and losses, but also to feed our hunger for beauty?" For ten yards he stumped on. "What is beauty?" He paused, laughed away the things he would not consider: later maybe when he needed philosophy and cynicism, but not now.

Dell lay as he left her. After undressing he made a light by which to see the hour on the dial of the yellow oak clock. Twelve-thirty. In the Kunderd house a window was lighted: he looked from its gleam with gathering emotion at his wife. In her long lean face a little nobility remained. No. Much nobility. Man's natural need to flatter himself caused him to extravagantly magnify her virtues. And after all these years did there not linger a part of the peculiar bow of her lips? a delicate imprint that wore well like her patience. And she was not an old woman at all. But that stark figure—what would Archipenko make of it? Or Jacob Epstein?

When they came to these fields from the human city Dell was his being: if she were absent he was lost and dejected. Now it was if she were not here. Sometimes he was surprised to see her so close to him in the house, with her latterly discovered air of resigned suffering. He no longer

gave her his thoughts, his ideas, for these there was virgin audience more to his taste.

Examining Dell so soon after Gladys she was unexpectedly grotesque. Her features became more unattractive the longer he looked at them. But what did he look like, this conquistador? He tipped to the glass to see a face live, expectant, excited by something new and fine.

Under his scrutiny Dell woke. The expression of his face made her sit up with a slight gasp.

"Oh we are going back home!" she exclaimed.

For a minute he sadly measured the hope he was about to snuff out. Dell told him last week how the days of autumn tired her feet, there were so many small obstacles to be stepped over or trod on carefully. Then when the sky darkened and lamps were set in the house she saw in the artificial brilliance more years lying like cement blocks across her way. . . . "All of us have spells of despondency. You've had them in New York." That was what he told her then.

"I've been thinking dear," he turned the wick low that he might not see her face too clearly. "There is life here as everywhere, and contentment. I think we had better stay here, always."

Her reaction was undemonstrative. She glanced at the cuffs of her soiled nightgown and rubbed the lace frill with her fingers.

"I want water." Robert was left in the room, to stumble to the bed and sleep.

Dell placed the lamp on the watershelf over the wash bench. She drank greedily from the tin dipper, spilling water on her gown. The brilliant pink bloom of a geranium in a pot by the bucket arrested her eyes. She felt its petals, sniffed the delicate odor, then broke it off and stuck it in the neck of her gown. It blazed against her yellow skin like fire in an unused hearth. Wearing the crimson flower she returned to the chamber.

"Good heavens! One o'clock!" Hastily putting the light out she fumbled back to bed. Through the window she saw a distant point, like a large star. "The Kunderd girl sits up late. . . ."

PORTRAIT

SHE wore around her long pale neck and prominent shoulders a quaker collar of the whiteness of seamist, underneath which there was skin, muscle, bone, organs and again skin and gingham. Her leached figure in its hangings of changeable color was circled with a halo of commonplaceness.—She seemed to move in a pool of dark water into which you had only to put your hand to find the tin bottom at palm-depth. Little waves from this lake of impounded character were constantly flickering the surface, mimicking a sea or a deep inlet.

She was a lengthy talker—she talked for hours. There was no end: it might have been ages she sat with her elbows on the table, thin lips touched with a little white, moving, moving—almost without sound for her husband who looked at her lips and beyond at his own musings.—Her eyes of dark blue into which the white was running watched intently and enthusiastically her husband's wasted face.—Not that she thought of Oscar Noble as a listener. He was something to throw words at. Whom, she said, was one to give confidences to if not to one's husband? No secrets should come between man and wife: from the length of her talk he thought Hattie told him everything, even her dyspeptic visions.

Through a haze of dreaming, ghosts of words came across his black meditation. "Crossing at Harry's store . . ." "flannel to line baby's . . ." "her second child . . ." "hair, dyed, I think, and shingled."—Landmarks in a continent of talk about her children who, like their mother, he always felt strangely unfamiliar with.

Having hoisted her interest up she got the last batch of letters from the children off the dresser and read them aloud for the third time, the sentences of their guileless thoughts kinking his laboring mind with echoes from the outer world. He could never explain his unfilial attitude toward his children. They wanted so much, they took so much, and whenever Oscar Noble was apparently running down his fugitive thoughts some mention of them shattered into his content.

"What is life?" This was the simple question about which he would weave by the hour a crude net of answers, piling them up until exhausted. His ten last years of invalidism had weakened his control of his passions, he was getting irritable, and while in his leisure he saw, as he could not when he was tending his tobacco crops and stock, how beset with interrogations all existence was, he could answer them less and less.

He was passive. His wife had a stake in life, wanted to stay on to see it all—the cutting of her last grandchild's first teeth, the ripening of the old wine. . . .

"However, the corn is as good as I could expect from the season. I am beginning to shuck now. Mabel is helping me, as hands are hard to get."

"Did Tom say when he was coming?"

"I just read that." She pushed back her white hair and gave the thin old figure a straight stare.—He resembled a weathered mannikin, with his old black clothes and a checked shawl on his lap. His face was reposed like a storm cloud borne aloft by ground winds: it was become a mask of almost white color. The heavy red splotches had faded from his skin and from being a ruddy farmer he looked now like a dilapidated clerk, worn out with handling dry goods.

Hattie Noble started again to talk. On the glass panes the night illumination shivered. The unashamed wraith of the moon sat on the elm bough listening to an owl's serenade.

Mr. Noble looked attentively at his wife and observed patches of manure on her shoes. Lately he had begun to notice her slovenliness. But it was just because he had so little to do. Before he was stricken he was too busy to see how dirty he kept himself. His wife fell heir to his duties and was to be seen through the day going about the stables, discussing work with the three negro tenants and swinging her arms in happy industry. To Mr. Noble's chagrin his wife seemed to be growing younger while daily his sixty-two years bore more heavily on him.—While she was trotting about in dirty dresses he sat through hours the minutes of which pricked him like a shower of clipped wire. In the house he opened the ancient books on the table, to read nothing;

he peered out the window, to see nothing; he alone seemed alive at the center of a dead world, not even a corpse passing his reviewing stand. Wearily he folded his shawl on his knees and resumed his thinking, his throbbing, ineffective attack on the ennui of being alive.

—When Hattie was eating she snuffled continually and wiped her greasy fingers on her dress. He had seen this of late. Also, when asking him how he felt she assumed a perfunctory tone, but when the children were mentioned she was alert. Tom, Alice and Nat—these were their names, which he heard over and over through the day.

The children came every month from their farm and office to see the old place. Tom would stick his hands out to the fire after inquiring as to the old man's health and wander out to look at the stock or the wheat coming out of the cool autumn soil, hardly green wisps of vitality, or he would poke the glistening balls of late cabbage, or probe the turnips sitting on the earth like vases of purple porcelain stuck full of green fronds.—Alice could not stay at the house. In masculine attire, knickerbockers and white shirt, she would be roaming about the woods looking for pipsissewa and three-lobed negatica on the newly leafed floor of the forest. When at evening she left in her indelicately noisy car there was always a kiss for her father, a cool soft perfumed caress that sent blood to his heart and made him think of velvet, grass in spring seasons, and love.—Then she was off to her employment agency office, taking young Nat with her—Nat who was so crammed with news that few would hear all he had to say to his folks, of politics, of the last game at Mayo Park, of his bright sayings, and of a girl, Mattie, who cropped up in his talk whenever his tongue wagged.—These three persons left Mr. Noble to himself after salutation, so the days of their visits were the dullest ones, even Hattie was not by to be criticized, to be marvelled over and observed in growing wonder.

Suffering makes man wise. So it must be. For what part of his time did he give to mental problems before sickness set him aside like a cracked pitcher of broth to cool and thicken? Yet, was he now wise?—He was an oddly unno-

ting man, but he was beginning to look into himself. . . .

Mrs. Noble trotted off shaking her blowsy head. She stuffed her hands into the pockets of her white sweater. Whenever she moved she gave little jerks to her head, "refined airs."—A minute passed before she returned, bringing a short stick of pine wood on which the rosin had collected in sticky gobs.

"Do you want anything else? It is bedtime, almost. So you had better not go to sleep yet. I am going to look at the turkeys. They have to be shipped tomorrow."

"There. No. Please leave me awhile. I wish you wouldn't wiggle your hands so. You make me shiver."

It was the period of the year when he was used to stomping around in the woods with a gun shooting at but not always killing the small game that roamed there. The gobbling of turkeys brought this thing to his mind.—

The swaying of a lantern in Mrs. Noble's hand sent curves of light about the dark lot. Once it shot a wide beam at the stable, then the oaks emerged an instant from the gloom. He saw her pass between the ash trees that had spread leaf blankets about their roots, looked for a day with a last yellow eye across unrobing acres, and then bare armed slept before the season of snows.

There was suggestion of romance in Hattie's carrying a light in the gloom.—It made him recall how she looked when she sat with a white fan swishing puffs of powder from her face, like clover pollen, and settled her rumpled clinging dress when he released her in the tan air of the dancing room. It was their first fancy-dress ball.—They had walked out to the yard, in the early morning, leaving the rest still dancing. The sun was not very far below the pallid east. They were out early, to catch the day young, but the sparrow was there before them, chipping the air with short quick stroke, and the cricket plucked a last note with an eye on a cool stone's shade. . . . They heard without understanding these sayings of nature. He pulled her behind a tree as a gray head poked around a post of the lighted porch and peered and peered with maddened curiosity. . . .

Thomas, the tawny house cat, sat at Mr. Noble's feet. He

paused in washing his face, tongue caught between black lips, in sudden wonder at the creeping wavering light cast on the floor by the wood fire. He sprang upon it, tried to knead it in a yellow ball from the floor, and couched deep in blank wisdom on his master's feet.

A heavy stomping portended the entry of a giant; the door swung out and old Jim, a black man of small stature, came in.

"I come to wrop de matuses, Um. Yassuh." His voice was deep and enormous, a hoarse roar even when he tried to speak gently.

"Alright, Jim. There they are, over in the corner."

"Yassuh. Um. Miss Hattie done tole me whar dey is, paper 'n all, suh."

Old Jim had put on a brick tint sweater. The room was warm. He opened a vest dyed by years of tobacco gum. A patch on his shirt had ripped off showing a piece of skin the color of iron. His face was of that color also, as of a clumsily fashioned effigy of cast metal put in a pantry for spiders to build on and flies to speck.

The tomatoes were piled in a corner and the reddish mound was getting flat. With a quick grasp, a crunch of paper around each fruit, he jammed them into an empty flour barrel.

"Leave the ripest ones for the top, Jim."

"Yassuh. Heap on em ripe, too. Doan speck dey keep long."

"That's right. But you never can get a woman to do a thing right. They should have been picked before."

"Um." He cleared his throat of some large obstacle, wheezed and clutched his asthmatic chest. "I knows. Niggers dat way too. My May, she allus leaves de matuses till de vines done grayed an den she go trouncin roun packin um. Womens . . . Heady. Boun to hab dey way, Suh."

Mr. Noble smiled and looked through the window. Mrs. Noble was going around the yard examining the flower beds that had been mulched with straw. When winter began to nibble at the leaves she started on her perennial borders,

protecting them against the cold.—Not a green thing stood above the waste now, except a mountain laurel which, when all else was asleep, kept up its watch through the winter for a secret no other growing thing among its fellows knew. There it stood, glossy, erect; and all through its watch it would remain so until next spring when it would break a secret of whirling spokes and painted bowls that finally ended in some gray fists of seed. . . .

Now she was bending under the persimmon tree where her turkeys collected every morning to eat the withered pink fruit. She looked very dark, in the night. The light moved in front of her as she walked, without falling on her face. —A rabbit hopped out of the straw about the tree, where it had been eating persimmons, followed instantly by a large white cat.—Then she turned and came briskly to the window. She put her lips against the panes, holding up a bunch of frost-tarnished white chrysanthemums.

“Doesn’t this make you think of our wedding?”

The question came dimly through the glass.

“Of what else?” he answered, and saw her go away smiling, without listening for his reply.

And he laughed at the ideas she brought him with those cold flowers. . . .

When son Tom came he brought their only grandson, a boy of five, to whom Mrs. Noble would tell stories of her youth while the little fellow drummed his grimy feet against his chair, wondering if there were dragons in the far-off era when she was young. . . . It was true that Hattie carried white flowers that time, but they were roses. And he connected mums with the period when the cricket counts the minutes as they pass and pass on steady wing, when silence rests in the trees like travelled birds asleep, when the corn shocks march like stately duchesses in solemn court progress across the drowsing hills, when summer, in a night, pours his blood on the maples and the starved winds come at dawn to snuff up the scarlet pools.—

When they were married the hollyhocks propped a low hung sky with pale green fingers thick with colored rings. —He had only known her two months before that event.

She was teaching a public school in the neighborhood and he met her at that public dance, in a room across from the dancing room where some engrossed men played cards.— They talked a little, that time, then when speech ended they sat without fretting: he looked long at her unspoiled third finger while she peered over his stooped head at nothing, and the scheming cardplayers, and the tree budding below the glass window.

“The cherry will soon be blooming,” she remarked. And they laughed and went over to take part in the boisterous fun of sweating couples.—

Mr. Noble saw Jim’s ears in motion by the up and down disturbance of his gray hair patches.

“Jim!”

“Um. Yassuh.” He seemed about to choke.

“Stop eating those tomatoes.”

“Now boss, I want eating nothin but a teensey one dat was nigh rotten.”

Mr. Noble chuckled over Jim’s discomfiture and watched the manoeuvring of a chilly fly on the ceiling. In small spots lime had fallen away from the laths. The tiny black insect crawled over the laths, endeavored to leap an abyss between them, and fell straight into the glass of tea on the arm of Mr. Noble’s chair. He fished it out delicately with a toothpick.

Mrs. Noble came in bringing a chill gust of air with her. She clapped her hands together and trotted off again, her shoulders drawn together under the heavy sweater. The door of the dining room slammed, the staccato tapping of her feet, and the kitchen door opened and shut.—This was the routine of each day’s end. In the morning she would rise from beside him, losing her voice in immense yawns, wave her arms into her dress and rush out with an armful of split kindling. . . . A blue gray cloud from the kitchen chimney would sail past the window and the odor of fried meat came to his nostrils, penetrating all the doors and walls. Then there was his tray to pick over and the query, “Did you like your breakfast?” to be answered with as much politeness as possible. Old Jim then emerged in his never

changing garb to put him in his chair, to sit while the day collected the hours and rolled them down a visible declivity like twelve stones seen disappearing over the edge of a soundless pit.

At night he slept lightly. At midnight he would tensely listen to the clucking out of another day, and hear a murmur as of wings against the somber sky. When the middle hour passed without his waking he felt cheated of a dramatic incident.

—He had worried jealously about his wife of late. Hattie talked much in her sleep these nights. He would frequently wake to hear her babbling of "Jack." When she was dreaming he would turn and look at her. Under the low turned light her face had the repose of finality. Where her eyes looked out curiously upon a fascinating world the yellow lids held lakes of murky shadow. When she was awake her being was transparent but in sleep mysteries came to the surface. . . . For instance, there was a crumbling away of consciousness and she babbled of "Jack."—He racked his wit to think who this Jack might be. He believed he knew but the name and person and connection would not come to his relaxed mind.

Old Jim was still working over the tomatoes. His broad shoulders made him, in his crouching posture, seem like a crushed Atlantidae: his chaplet of stiff gray hairs resembled the adornment around the head of a column.

"Jim. You knew my wife before she came here to live."

"Yassuh, dat I did. I used to live in de same county wit her."

"She was pretty then."

"Uh huh. Dat she was. When you comed over an got her at least er dozen hearts was bruk. Ole Misto Bailey never married: n old Misto Whitlow coted her heavy, an dey says he tuk to de ministry arter yall married. Yassuh. An dar was Misto Bellow, mos es bad."

"Ah . . . Did Whitlow go to see her then?"

"Yassuh. . . . De bery same man what preaches here now. He comin termorrer to spen de day."

"True. I heard Hattie mention that." And then he was illuminated. The man's name was Jack, of course, Jack

Whitlow. How feeble his memory must be to forget that. And she was putting flowers in the house, chrysanthemums, preparatory to his visit. That was the reason for the turkey, put away to roast tomorrow: why she had been baking cakes in the morning.

Whitlow had visited the place monthly and made himself very attractive to the invalid with his talk of old times. He was a small thin man who always picked the softest chairs to rest his slab-like form in. He was bald, had an exceptionally large flat nose, with all his other features small. When he talked he clapped his attenuated palms and pulled the lapels of his slick black coat.

Mr. Noble grew chilly, as on those mornings when he rose to find snow had climbed to the window and tented the twigs of the old elm, and underneath a white vacancy meeting a blind sky. He would gather the covers under his chin and see Hattie's houseplants leaning toward the panes, peering constantly across the waste for a green sign, and old Jim would come in to add a log to the blaze. . . . He was chilly now with an impotent rush of anger through his body.

Mrs. Noble came in with pink cheeks and held her hands over the blaze.

"There is a new calf in the barn. The red cow, you know. . . . It is all black, a female. Do you think, if it grows well, we ought to save it?"

"I suppose so. We need more cattle on the pastures."

"You should see it. Just as frisky, though just born a while ago, not drowsy and dazed like new born things. When I entered the barn it got up from a bundle of feed and walked off switching its tail. . . . Well, I think everything's done. The Methodist preacher is coming tomorrow. . . . Time for bed. Jim, as you go out, see if there's a cat in the entry."

She busied herself getting Mr. Noble ready for bed and he received her attentions quietly. When he was put between the cool sheets, Mrs. Noble took the pins from her hair. The thin coils fell around her shoulders. She got an old gray covered geography from the lamp stand, which served as a portfolio, extracted a sheet of paper, and wetted her pencil with the tip of her tongue.

"I've letters to write, to the children," she explained. "Go to sleep now."

Mr. Noble felt the snug comfort of the bed stealing into his limbs. He dozed off a few minutes and on waking peered over the roll of the blankets at his wife. She was not writing. She was looking into the fire with smiling eyes.

"What a fate," Mr. Noble said to himself. "To be married to such a dull thing."

The woman came out of her dream to see the man on the bed going off to sleep.

All sounds died in the bedroom, except the stewing of a log on the fire and the internal operations of Mrs. Noble's digestion.

She shook her head in melancholy and began to move her pencil over the paper, her lips fixed in a firm line of concentration. "Dearest Tom," she wrote.

FRANCES FLETCHER

LITTLE TOWNS

You are ever with me
Little towns of white
And green among
Your hills of night

Little towns of white
And green, where church
Spires taper slender
As the silver birch

Where tombstones gleam
And spirits of the dead
Frequent the life
They once here led

RAYMOND HOLDEN

LANDSCAPE WITH FIGURES

1.

A plank above the softened, gold-flecked ground,
Freed of the boots of him who left the shed
Half opened, settled back with no more sound
Than a mild wind could use. The gravel spoke
Its trodden words and a small runnel wound
Figures of silt with silver. The man led
A thread of light, that thinned and almost broke
Upon his shouldered axe's wavering head,
Downhill, away from a woman in a cloak.

Torn on the shadow of the woodlot edge
The thread snapped and its carrier was gone
Into that empty world which trees can wedge
With ease apart from any lonely farm.
The woman stood and watched the stirred air fledge
His absence with small tips of sun that shone
Either against those trees or in the warm
Corners of eyes that knew themselves alone,
Subject not even to a sense of harm.

The house was loud with pressure of its small
Unequal emptiness and with the crack
Of sapling birch beneath the rise and fall
Of breath from covered pots upon the stove.
These sounds were looped upon the pointed call
Of a blue-jay in the door-yard tamarack,
The woman held her cloak and did not move.
A crow, waving a slow and creaking black,
Passed overhead, over the maple grove.

As if those wings, those lacquered scissors, ripped
The stretched occasion into present and past,

The woman, tall and straight, firm-flanked, fine-hipped,
Moved with the severing across the stir
Of weaving morning winds and slowly dipped
Her stature in the thickened lightness cast
On grass and gravel by what seemed to her
Half home and half great weight to hold her fast
From gulfs unseen and thereby deadlier.

Across the sill she saw the darkened wood
Shut like a gate upon the man it held.
She closed her eyes and trembled as she stood
Yielded to fire that fumbled at her thighs
Yet thrust no certain shape against her mood.
The wind brought in the sound of a tree felled
And flung a mist of reason at her eyes.
Like water from the trodden ground she welled
Out of the house that was trodden by the skies.

In a bright clearing high upon the hill
Where old, gray stumps of young poles cut for fence
Stood among blades of flag beginning to fill
Their ripening buds with blue she made her nest
And, with the sun upon her back, let spill
About her throat the fine hair, dark and dense,
That smelled like slow-burned herbs. She crushed her breast
Against the lively grass within whose tense
Flesh, as in hers, a fire was manifest.

She lay with open eyes, her body sloped
Downward toward throat and knee from the round hips.
The sound of little winds, in silence coped,
Breathed at her ears. She heard a footstep grate
On stone. She did not stir. Her fingers groped
For twigs to break between their cool, moist tips.
A shadow flooded toward her, narrow and straight.
She smiled. It shut the sunlight from her lips.
She kissed its bearded mouth and clasped its weight.

The crown of a white birch wrote a slow arc
Against the sky as if, across the grain

Of the day's circling passage, it could mark
Some tardy cloud whose motion it must trace.
Over this violent flesh, above the dark
Close delicacy of tossed hair and the stain
Of doubled shadow at its side, a lace
Of hardhack wove with early blackberry cane.
The woman slept, with an arm across her face.

2.

The drift of air, the darkness, swinging low,
Caught in the trees and held there, thickening
And the last eddies of light's undertow
Swirled westward, rustling. On the bottom ground
The weedy undergrowth moved, stately and slow,
The rooted house sent out a varying ring
Of beaten color through which, as if drowned,
The man ascended, strangely seeming to bring
Behind him the barred wood that made no sound.

He left his axe in the shed and left a noise
Of falling stove-wood there among the chips.
He paused in the door and saw the woman poise
Facing away from him, her shoulders taut,
Branched from a back as straight and firm as a boy's.
He reached for and pressed his salty lips
Upon her neck, and held her body caught
Resistant to his length, his finger-tips
Meshed on the handfuls of firm breast they sought.

She drew herself away against a chair,
Marking a hostile silence by the deep
Hollow her breath made with its driven air
Between her straight arms—stood and watched his look.
Changed by command of speech set ruling there,
Announcing wonder that she bade him keep
That stormy story closed within its book,
He saw her fury, her eyes piled to weep.
And felt his flesh go heavy. His heart shook.

He said no word at supper. The lamp sang
And sputtered with singed moths. She did not eat.
Across her hands she let her cold face hang
Striking all speech, all ceremony dead.
He pushed his chair back and the table rang
Its shaken bells of cup and spoon. His feet
Thundered across the sill into the shed
Where he made raised axe and prone stove-wood meet
To expiate the trouble in his head.

He heard the last dish put away. A lightness,
In some way passionate to hear, moved faint
Beyond a closed door at whose threshold brightness,
Shot with a changing shadow, flooded through.
His throat was collared with a fingerless tightness,
His loins were crumpled in a dry constraint.
He stood and swayed and wondered what to do.
He picked at bubbles in the door-jamb paint.
Outside the lustreless night wind loosely blew.

He shivered and moved in beside the stove
And, growing warmer, tried the bed-room door.
It yielded and he gave its fold a shove
That framed a weeping woman as she lay
Shaken upon the white bed's piteous groove,
Clutching the pillow. The wide-boarded floor
Creaked as he knelt and his hands found their way
Under her body, under the chill it wore.
He spoke such words as a man has to say.

She turned away and struggled, clawed his cheek,
Cried out and let the eyes shake out their tears.
She writhed against the mouth that tried to speak
Words that she would not hear because she wept.
He held her till her madness left her weak
And she, beneath such quiet as water wears,
Lay pasture to the hungry creature kept
So long bewildered. Then against her ears
The heart beat for escape. The tired man slept.

3.

Thickened with sun the slow wind and its smells
Of prone hay, shaken pollen and hot sand
Surged in the meadow. Yellow, tearing bells
Of goldfinches rode its waves. A man's deep word
To horses, moving and pausing in the swells,
Broke upward from the wind and the grass. The land
Was undivided from the light, the heard
Sound from the apparent motion of the fanned
Green, the invisible air from the visible bird.

The horses, loosed, flowed thickly on their way
Up through the willows and the scattered stones
That once, through ice, went burrowing for clay
And now are all but taken by earth and drowned.
The great hooves echoed under the height of the day,
Making the globe's dispersed and broken bones
Cry out. The man, less noticed for his sound,
Crunched at their heels. Small spruces held their cones
Motionless, rooted in air as in the ground.

There was the house, small, angular and bare,
Brightened against the bitter noon of the hill.
The horses thundered into the barn. The glare
Shimmered above the yard which hens had fled
To fill the lilac's shadow. A quick flare
Of woman's laughter crossed the burning sill.
The man stopped at the door and bent his head,
Listening above the heart he could not still
To the leaves of sound a stand of voices shed.

A stir of chairs and feet set firmly down
Within the house sent him, in quick pretense,
Into the cool shed, there to become known
By the hard rattle of small logs kicked awry.
He heard the screen door crash, the bell from town
Shake twelve into the circling heat, the tense
Gnashing of wheel and gravel start and die

Beyond the highroad maples, and the immense
Preponderant silence close over earth and sky.

He crouched upon a block and stared at the floor
Trailing a finger in its litter of chips.
At his back the woman swung the opened door.
He did not lift his head. She stood and watched
With a slow nod, sideways, of a face that wore
A freshness, all but speech, upon its lips
And hands that held the loose-hung door unlatched
Behind her. His uneasy finger-tips
Dissembled in the shavings, groped and scratched.

She came before him, swaying as a tree
Sways in the light preliminary wind
That finds its voice in rain. Bent downward, he,
Under the old felt tilted on his head,
Looked at her ankles, pointed delicately
Down at the crooked spot where he had thinned
The shavings over the earthen floor of the shed.
Failing his eyes, his shoulders spoke his mind
And they were lax and desolate and dead.

The woman spoke. He noticed that the sun
Had reached her skirt and that a torn hem hung
Swirling among the motes the ground-wind spun.
His hand went out as if to pull it loose
Then suddenly back, leaving the thing undone.
He drew his fingers to his mouth as if stung.
He heard her cold voice, balancing its abuse
Above him, saw the hot sun how it flung
About her knees its innocent, slow noose.

He heard her do the sum of all his sins
With another's excellences added in.
She said he was a beast. He scratched his shins
And like a beast was dumb for all his pain.
He heard her say that no beast ever wins;
That she would go. He broke into a grin.

He heard the shed door swing and shut again
And say as much to him as all her din.
He lost the grin. The sounds tore through his brain.

That storm of hers, ruthless and sharp and dense,
Beat wildly through the shed but neither shook
His body nor the witless elements
Of its familiar place: chains, axes, saws,
Old weather-pitted shingles, wire for fence,
A season's wood, a fox-trap on its hook.
Shadows of crows that scattered dying caws
Slid by. The man turned, giving a swift look
Upward and then away. It made her pause.

Then she was gone. He heard the light latch shake;
Her heels go dimming across the inner floor
Like hammer-blows; the sounds a house can make
When one too deeply listens for dismay.
He heard the gushing of his own blood break
Against its narrow walls; the smothered roar
Of trees in motion make its senseless way
Into his wit; and from the barn's high door
The whinny of a horse, the rustle of hay.

If she had called him as he crossed the yard
He would have heard her, for he walked on grass
Rather than shatter, with a crunch of hard,
Sun-brittle road the ear so tightly nerved.
The beetles in the oat-bin, on their guard
Against his step, buried their black-winged glass
Deep in the grain. The great earth, riding its curved
Course quivered onward, quietly, and the mass
Of shadow from the lintel slowly swerved.

4.

The shed door, dragging shadow, swung its boards
As if it would have slammed, but with a click
Swung back again, repeating creaky words,

And swung again and, slowly, once again.
The company of maples played their chords
On strings of stillness for a flight of quick
Unnoticed birds. A single jerky hen
Paced, with deliberate motion, the yard, thick
With bluets braced in the ground-wind like small men.

The one man, towering upward in the door,
Of his proportionate house, looked at the trees
As if the massive dimness which they wore
Might, when he looked away, have let come through
The woman whom his body hunted for
To patch upon his interdicted ease.
She was not walking there. No thing was new
Across the inactive figure of the breeze
Which, with no care for a man's anguish, blew.

The dry, flesh-scoring envy, the still pain
Of being out of tune with happenings
Tightened his face. The whistle of a train
Beyond the hills, a beautiful small sound,
Came to his ears, now beautiful in vain.
That fluted shaft of music pulled at strings
Which set him moving like a leashed young hound
To run and nuzzle among top-drawer things
To see if any clue was to be found.

There were her clothes, bleached by the fine white air
Of many dryings, stiffened with the stone
Of mountain water. She had left them there
To mystify and make unbearable
The curious vacancy flung everywhere.
There were the gathered things which had been blown
Full of her shape that, since their lightness fell
From her hands, had no form but their slight own—
Of slight stuff simply woven, folded well.

He closed the drawer and took the things he had
Into his wit, the empty room, the fright

Engendered of this change, the mad
Cracking of flesh, the senses unrelieved.
These things, these letters written on their pad,
Spelled nothing, shift their order as he might.
And then, not having vitally believed,
He stood and shivered in the doorway light
And stared at the dark maples whose crowns heaved.

She was not coming from their shade. There stood
Only himself, a man of vague intent
Upon the hub of time before a wood—
Simple, not sure, reluctant, helpless, lax.
A figure drained of its compelling mood.
He spat and straightened, spat again and bent
To drop his hand on the smooth-hafted axe.
It met his hand. He lifted it and went
Down toward the grove to lop his tamaracks.

And as he went he turned upon the young
Green shoots that brushed his calves, for evidence,
A testamentary face without a tongue,
A taut look hinting of a visceral fox.
The leaves and thorns were just. They merely swung.
He thought of the young body, pale and tense
Whose image seemed to hammer at the locks
Now metallized on his heart. He found a sense
Of being ill-used with which to deaden its knocks.

He trod the quiet wood. A white-throat raised
The slender ladder of its song. The blown
Levels of leaf seemed water. The air blazed
With shifting particles of light. He stopped,
Watching the hollow before him as if dazed,
The sun, not by his trouble overthrown,
Held on its weightless shafts, securely propped,
The old scene—hummocks with false mitre grown,
Trees, and the coined light their branches dropped.

None was before him to have up the veil
A man keeps gathered in the unready heart.

Only a foolish squirrel shook its tail
Against the depthless wood. No craft of fears
Nor muster of proud wits wove into mail
The threads of circumstance, no power nor art
Made earth's intolerable peace less fierce
Than a struck blow unkind enough to start
In ignorant eyes a rising grief of tears.

5.

Being dependent on no hand of hers
The summer and its subject breadth of sound
Swelled to its noon with all the usual stirs
Of things not changeable, not absented.
Being alone, her shape a shift of blurs
Wrapped like a loose cloth on a little wound
That bothered memory, he slept. He fed
Himself, his beasts. He tramped the wooded ground
With a strange likeness of his usual tread.

All that now bore her absence,—the rank field
She would have had him mow; the dry, mature,
Not now tenacious trees; the dark they yield
Spilled from the loose palms of their foliage;
Asters that autumn rests on; the revealed
Blackness of berry stalks; the piled manure
Grown light and dry; the hidden saxifrage;
The hollow house, withered and loose and poor;—
These things were now the hasps upon his cage.

The high cool barn that smelled of dusty hay
And broke its silence with a stir of hooves,
A flutter at the eaves, a champ, a neigh,
Less served her cause than house or tree or weed.
Here, when he came with water, he dared stay
Sitting upon a box, picking from grooves
Among the worn planks matted chaff and seed,
His flesh compressed as houses are by roofs
By the thick-raftered fact of being freed.

And as he sat, the lowly, living horses
Blowing their speechless breath against their stalls,
Seemed good companions in a war of forces
To which both he and they were simply blind.
He held a letter in his hand. The courses
Of rounded words beat back his wit like walls.
Their lack of sound sent long, dumb waves to wind
The channels through which feeling flares and falls.
Round shapes of horses loomed upon his mind.

He rose and walked the floor. The heavy mare
Turned back her head and curved her lips and cried.
He stopped and looked but could not meet her stare.
The slip of the sleek muscles of her flank
Struck his mind chilly under the roots of the hair,
Starting a pang of burning in his side.
In the slow air the smell of horse was rank.
He stroked her croup. She twitched her tail and shied.
Her heels shot upward from the muck of the plank,

The sound of a man falling was not heard
Save by a hen, performing at the sill
The limited economy of a bird.
The hen alone took fright at the marred shape
That lunged a sudden thrust her way and stirred
A sprouted clump of oat blades;—that lay still
And not withdrawn, eyes wide and mouth agape
And arms clutched at the belly while the shrill
Offenseless cricket crawled upon its nape.

6.

By hidden moves its riding of the air
Had tilted the earth cold-wards, so that trees
Made lengthened shade at midday. In the bare
Field the dry pipes of stubble stood askew
And the snow buntings chippered and the rare
Light of a colored autumn held the breeze
As glass holds breath. The hills were sharply blue.

The woman tucked the lap-robe under her knees
And watched the first house whiten into view.

The still, cold weight of sky curved overhead
The inexact, fine figure of its span
That could not know what season now lay dead
Among the packed grains of the shallow sod.
There was a horse, tapping with shadowy tread
The unaffected earth; a stooped, thick man,—
A grain of being drying in its pod,—
And a cold, huddled woman. The horse ran
Through light that stayed his going as he trod.

The man said nothing and the woman rode
As if her rigid bone, laced with its nerves,
Could keep a loosening body from the lode.
The large heart of the circle's stone, that held
The river water to its arc and bowed
The roadside bushes and gave clouds their curves.
The village houses, under elms, stood spelled
In unlocated silence—that which serves
As time for elm and person not yet felled.

Passing a white gate which made separate
A space of grass, scattered and almost gay
With ranks of headstones, the horse changed his gait.
The old man looked into the woman's face.
The mirrors of her world went blind as slate.
The town, loosed from that moment, fell away
Dragging the elms and spruces from their place.
She sat and watched the horse's withers sway
Against the road in slow irrelevant grace.

Before the door, against which leaves were drifted
Under the winds that rattle leaves in fall,
The old man checked his horse, nudged her and shifted
The lap-robe from her knees. He set her down,
Nodded and looked away. The maples lifted
Accustomed crowns, now delicate and small

Over the roughened shingles, that were blown
Loose on the roof. Ledge high against the wall
Stood the dry stalks of grass which none had mown.

As if the weight of earth and sky at war
Had altered the proportions of the house
The door stuck in the jamb, held there ajar.
The woman slipped through into the old husk,
The light that entered with her, like a bar
Falling upon the floor, contrived to rouse
Only a dead glow. In the broken dusk
She stood and listened to the tenant mouse
And smelled the stale air saturate with his musk.

The sudden change from the half wintry blur
Of vivid region with no walls, to black,—
Thick dusty black—struck motion out of her.
She could not see the hollow core of the spot
That pressed a darkness like a wild beast's fur
Against her throat and eyes and at her back.
The heart, the uncurbed heart, slackened and hot,
Crowded the blood along its stiffened track
Remembering things that had been and had not.

She fumbled for the dresser and drew out
One thundering drawer and found and struck a match
And, from her fingers, let it sputter and spout
Globed fire against the dark. Upon the bed
The clothes were tumbled in a shadowy rout.
The match died. She reached backwards for the latch
And leaned against the invisible door, her head
Thrown backward in the gloom where none could watch
Her body and the shell of strength it shed.

She flung herself upon her knees. Her eyes
Pressed by the points of fingers, in the dark,—
Desire being dead,—saw what desire defies,
The march of terror, the exacting day—
Frozen, as motionless vapors clot their skies,

Against the young heart's small, inconstant spark.
Here where she knew she could not dare to stay
She saw, and knew the sight a rainbow arc,
Light in the rust of rubbish thrown away.

Once more behind the horse, the house resealed,
She entered the thin pennon of that air,
Native to earth, which earth's known summits wield
Above the heads and houses of mankind.
The cold, light scents of autumn from a field
Rose up and set the color of a tear
Under her lids that wished to be made blind.
The cold man watched her with a diffident care
And lashed his horse. She heard the iron wheels grind.

7.

Two sat upon the gray and wooden porch
Above the street, under the burning light
Whose globe was filling with those flies that scorch
Their insubstantial wings and suddenly die
For nothing more contenting than a torch.
The bearded man, chin down, fingered the bright
Loop of his watch chain but his grave old eye
Watched something hung between him and the night.
The woman watched the chilly passers-by.

Across the river, balanced on the air
Carved with spoked stars,—the cold, black-gabled mass—
Stretched the thin whistle of a train, the fair
Sound of departure punctuating time.
The woman stirred a little in her chair;
Half rose, half spoke, but let the moment pass—
Sank back relaxed and shadowed, while the chime
Of the town clock broke like a heavy glass
As a bridge crashes under steps that rhyme.

Again she stirred, eyeing the old man's eye,
As one who has overrun some length of law

Requiring going, being slow and shy,
Might stir to court suggestion not to stay.
Again she failed, again sank back and saw
His heavy figure, weighing fixedly
Upon the edge she would have torn away.
The night air blew upon her, quick and raw.
Her hands were cold, her body heavy as clay.

Though it was only night, an interval
Of passage through a pyramid of dark,
Night was enough for her and was a wall
Built in the midst of all she seemed to know.
She watched the old man, watched the lamplight fall
Upon the face that once had seemed a stark
Salvation's countenance but was not so
Now in this moment that had lost its spark,
From which, being changeless now, no flame could grow.

The man moved, pushed his chair back, gripped his thighs,
Looking at her. "It's cold here, let's go in."
The boards creaked as he passed. She watched his eyes
That did not see her, but she could not speak.
She wished to sit but felt her body rise.
She followed him upstairs. Up there the thin
Rays of his beard spread on her breast, the weak
Width of his mouth upon her upraised chin
That lent its pride to a body elsewhere meek.

Quiet in its medium of crisped, black air
The double dome of earth whirled from its place
As if it knew how little men could bear
Sense of its metal violence under them.
Cold to the touch that she and sleep must share
She felt sleep take him in, and she could trace—
Embossed upon the dark—the mound, the stone
Through which the crooked root, the second stem
That bore her now, had pushed. She hid her face,
But the sight stayed. It knew that stratagem.

LYLE SAXON

THE CENTAUR PLAYS CROQUET

THE STRANGE CASE OF MRS. JOHN DAVID CALANDER
OF MIMOSA, LOUISIANA, AND THE FABULOUS MONSTER
WHICH SHE KEPT AS A PET, THEREBY CAUSING GREAT
SCANDAL IN THE COMMUNITY.

A COMPLETE HISTORY OF THE UNFORTUNATE AFFAIR,
TAKEN DOWN FROM SWORN TESTIMONY OF COMPE-
TENT EYE WITNESSES.

*Testimony of Matthew A. Fleming, M.A., Ph.D., Mem-
ber of the American Association of Sciences, and head of
the Department of Ancient Languages at the University of
Mimosa.*

I HESITATE, for various reasons, to enter into any discussion whatever relative to the strange case of Mrs. Ada Weatherford Calander of Mimosa, Louisiana, as so much nonsense has been written on the subject; and, in this State, the story (odd and unnatural enough as it appears even in its truthful aspect) has attained something of the fanciful and miraculous quality of a heathen legend, where fairies, gnomes and elves are taken for granted. In addition to this, the *religious* and *pagan* elements entering into it have been so distorted in various versions (spread by fanatics as propaganda for their respective creeds, and colored by their spite and prejudices, no doubt) as to cause indecision in the mind of any sane and serious student. Such a maze of mental cobwebs surrounds the whole unfortunate affair, that there is a tendency to doubt the story *in toto*. However, as numerous witnesses were available in various parts of the Pelican State, I have taken their testimony exactly as they have given it to me, (in most cases having the parties appear before a convenient Notary Public and affix their signatures to same) and I offer these testimonials here,

after giving to my readers a brief synopsis of the principal facts.

Little is known of the true origin of Ada Weatherford, save that she was an orphan in a Catholic Orphan Asylum, and was adopted, when approximately six years old, by Mr. Alphonse Adams Weatherford, of Mimosa. She was educated for some years by a governess, one Sarah Jingles, who has been lost sight of, and who came, rather mysteriously, to the Weatherford home in the early Spring of 1870, the year of Ada's adoption by her foster parents. The little girl was taught the elements of education: viz, reading, writing and number work, and, in addition, the arts of the home, which the Weatherfords considered Woman's True Sphere; in other words, fine cookery, sewing and those things pertaining to house management. It is said that the little one never really learned to use her needle properly, and had small aptitude for home-making, but preferred spending her time in the woods and fields. Those who remember her as a child, tell of her strange likes and dislikes: her preference for moonlight, for example, to God's sunlight; and they also tell of her habit of talking constantly to unseen companions whom she imagined real. Miss Jingles, sad to relate, rather spoiled her pupil by giving way to her whims; and, it is said, that frequently the two would absent themselves from the plantation house for a whole day at a time, going deep into the quagmires and swamps to "study nature." What really went on in the woods, no one knows, and no one can safely conjecture; but there are stories afloat of the child riding upon the back of a white goat, through glade and grove; and once she was nearly shot by a hunter who mistook her for a large hare.

Miss Jingles was in sole charge of the child after the death of Mrs. Weatherford in 1875, when Ada was 11 years old; and, in the years following, the intimacy between teacher and pupil progressed rapidly. The humbler studies were abandoned for the quadrivium: arithmetic, music, geometry and astronomy. There were lessons in French and in Mythology. Mr. Weatherford humored his adopted daughter to a great extent, giving her expensive presents, among

others a fine piano, upon which the girl played eerie melodies which sounded, say those who listened, like nothing they had ever heard before. In so far as is known, Miss Jingles was her only teacher in music, but the young girl soon outstripped her instructress in the art of keyboard manipulation.

Ada grew to womanhood in that lonely plantation house of the Weatherfords, with few friends but with many books. Her favorite copy of Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy" is before me as I write, the margin covered with hieroglyphs that I am unable to decipher. Upon the fly-leaf, there is a creditable drawing of a Centaur, possessing a handsome man's head with pointed beard and wild eyes. The lower portion of the figure is that of a horse, with four well-shaped legs and flowing tail. Oddly enough, in the drawing, the Centaur is shown holding a lady's high-heeled slipper in one hand. Whether this is the work of Ada Weatherford or of Miss Jingles, it is impossible to say. It is highly probable, however, that Ada drew the picture, having seen similar things in the books of pagan mythology which had been allowed to fall into her hands.

When Ada was 18 years old, she was married to Mr. John David Calander of Mimosa, a fine, upstanding man of many good qualities. He was a member of the Baptist Church, a large landholder, and in addition, a lawyer of considerable local reputation. He was, at the time of his marriage, a bachelor of 38 years of age, and, it is said, he idolized his wife, so many years his junior. They were married, according to the church records of Mimosa, on February 24th, 1882, in the home of the bride's father, and went afterward to New Orleans for the Mardi Gras festivities, staying at the St. Charles Hotel, as is proved by the register of that year, which was, fortunately, saved from the fire which destroyed that hostelry a few years later.

A miniature of the young Mrs. Calander, painted in New Orleans at that time, shows her a slim, dark-eyed young woman with a high-bred, oval shaped face, wearing her hair parted madonna fashion. The eyes of the portrait are limpid and beautiful, and the full lips are richly red. There

is one peculiarity about this portrait: although the face is unsmiling, almost grave in expression, it is, at the same time, full of secret laughter. The longer one studies the likeness, the more puzzled one becomes. Those who remember her best, say that the resemblance of the painting to the original is indeed striking.

During the brief honeymoon, the new Mrs. Calander met many friends of her husband's; among them Miss Amelie Boudousquie, whose sworn testimony is appended to these notes. Miss Boudousquie, a member of a fine old Creole family, is quick to praise Mrs. Calander's beauty and wit, but hesitates to comment upon the moral quality of her conversation, which she found "advanced" (to use her own phraseology) for that time. She (Ada Callander, as we must now call her) appeared distrait and dreamy, Miss Boudousquie testifies, but enjoyed the Mardi Gras parades and balls in the French Opera House, appearing to enjoy particularly the *mythological quality* of the festivities. Among the nymphs, mermaids, satyrs and fauns of the Carnival land of make-believe, she was radiantly happy, and even had her husband allow her to purchase costumes and disguises, including gilded horses' heads of papier mache, and winged slippers, from the shop of one Madame Alabau in Bourbon Street. What became of these gaudy trifles afterward can only be conjectured, but, according to the proprietor of the shop, they were shipped to the plantation at Mimosa.

The news of the death of Mr. Weatherford cut short their gaiety in New Orleans, and they returned home before their allotted time. Miss Boudousquie says that she found Ada Calander in tears in her room at the St. Charles Hotel one afternoon when she called, and was told of Mr. Weatherford's sudden demise (caused by a fall from a horse). The Calanders left that night for Mimosa and Miss Boudousquie did not see Mrs. Calander again for three years—and then it was at the performance of "Faust" at the French Opera, all of which is given in detail in Miss Boudousquie's sworn testimony.

When Mr. Weatherford's will was read, it was found that

Ada Calander was sole heir; she received the plantation, and various and sundry monies and other properties. She turned the management of the land over to her husband, giving him free rein, but keeping as her own a considerable quantity of ready gold which was locked in a large safe in the library of the country house. Mr. Calander, it is said, never questioned his wife's actions, loving her devotedly and passionately, and only accepting her properties because he knew her incapable of handling them for advantage to herself. Throughout this history, one never doubts the devotion of this sterling man for his wife, but one is often amazed at the strange tests to which she put his affection.

So they lived, these two, in that lonely place, seeing few people and entertaining visitors but rarely. True, he drove into the town of Mimosa daily, to his office in the old brick building on Mandolin Street, but she remained at home, deep in her studies.

According to the testimony of "Aunt" Charity Jimmerson, a Negress (long a cook in the Weatherford household) Ada resumed her life in the woods, frequently remaining absent for eight hours at a time, strolling, it is supposed, through dell and glade of the wooded estate. It was at this time that she published (in Harper's Magazine) her first poem, "The Were-Wolf," which has become so widely known for its mysterious quality and for its pagan note of unbelief in the Divine Mercy of God.

Other poems followed shortly: "Pan" in 1883; "Phantom Lovers" and "Europa" in the same year. In 1884, she published "Leda," in January, followed almost immediately by "Una and the Lion" and "The Bride of the Faun." These poems, it was considered, were too realistic for the taste of the period, and Harper's refused to publish her later effusions, which are said to show respect for neither God nor man. One of these unpublished "prose-poems" (as she called them) will be quoted in its proper place, as it throws considerable light upon her ultimate downfall. She did not write at all after November, 1884.

One shudders to think of the humiliation of Mr. Calander at this trying period; but despite the busy tongues of Mi-

mosa, he remained loyal to his wife, worshipping her devotedly, and passing the neighbors' comments of his wife's writings, with a smile and a shrug. Ada could do no wrong, and, like Caesar's wife, she was above suspicion—although, to be quite accurate, the Bard of Avon says that "Caesar's wife *should* be above suspicion," if I remember Shakespeare correctly.

In June, 1884, when Ada Calander was 20 years old, she brought a strange pet home with her—a Centaur, according to the testimony of Charity Jimmeson, who declares that Horace (for thus Ada called him) was a very handsome fellow, half-man, half-beast. It is impossible to shake her testimony, as this aged Negress declared that she helped take care of "Mr. Horace" and knew him well; she refused absolutely to believe the theory (advanced by Mrs. James Branch in her statement) that the Centaur was nothing more than an unusually intelligent horse which the perverse and unhappy woman had disguised in some way to resemble a man.

At any rate, this horse, or Centaur, was very timid about entering the house; but by careful coaxing, Mrs. Calander induced him to enter the drawing room, where he stood, restless and wild-eyed and switching his tail, while she played for him upon the piano.

Perhaps it is as well to introduce here the "prose poem" called "The Centaur Plays Croquet," which was written by Ada Calander at this time (approximately). Needless to say, this effusion was never printed, but was found among her papers, after her death:

"Come, my Centaur, let us have a game of croquet! The colored balls lie like painted flowers on the lawn and the wickets stand in order as do the events of my life. It amuses me to have you play so prim a game—you who remember Pan and who have cavorted with nymphs. Sadly you stand, slowly swaying your tail, and holding the mallet poised; while I, with tiny black lace parasol tilted against the sun, lift mincingly my skirt and

strike the ball with an affected scream of excitement—strike daintily, for fear of splitting my polonaise of striped silk.

“Your body, tanned by the sun, is like creamy ivory, and the texture of your flesh has the humid quality of a magnolia petal. You stand before me, my simple, sinewy fellow, with shoulders drooping—shoulders strong and hairless like those of the men of Castile. Your black curls shine sleekly; your teeth are of snowy whiteness and your lips are vivid beneath your beard. At the loins, where your man’s body melts into that of the stallion, you become wholly animal; there your hide has the sheen of satin and is mottled like moonlight under trees.

“What a Godlike brute you are, my Centaur! Still, you gaze at me with wistful eyes. Is it a soul you seek? Perhaps, who knows? For you have no soul, you fabulous man, you glorious beast, born two thousand years too late . . . Or is it I who have mislaid my era?

“If it is a soul you long for, you may have mine. See, I will tear it from my breast and offer it to you, glowing, in my pink-tipped fingers! (But the striped silk is stronger than I thought, and my stays resist my tugging.)

“As I fail, then, to give you what you ask, let us try to find another road to happiness. Take me upon your back and let us fly to the countries of your youth; let us return through the ages to your brothers who whinny upon Thessalian hillsides, while the old Gods whisper in the twilight beside trickling fountains. Laughter lies waiting for us there, lingering in those Pagan times before the Babe of Bethlehem was born, and the old Gods sighed and died.

“But before I mount to begin our riotous journey against the years, let me twine crimson pomegranate blossoms for your hair, and let me put

the first purple violet of Spring into your curling beard.

"Ah no! I am cruel, my Centaur . . . Come, let us have a game of croquet!"

While it is not incumbent upon me to make any criticism of this remarkable document, I must say that I consider it an extremely indiscreet paper. That a Southern lady should write such a thing at all, is unheard of, and that a Southern lady did write so brazenly in 1884, is unthinkable. Especially so to a student of mythology. For the behavior of Centaurs, even in antiquity, was not always all that it should have been, as is amply borne out in many works of ancient art. (I am thinking, particularly, of the central part of the western pediment of the temple of Zeus at Olympia.)

But to return to the day of his appearance, and to take up again the statement of Charity Jimmeson:

Mr. Calander, upon his return that night, gave an amazed cry at seeing the Centaur in the parlor, but, behind closed doors, he was presented and seemed to welcome the animal even as his wife had done. At any rate, Horace remained and soon became an exacting charge upon the household.

His diet consisted, for the greater part, of green things: vegetables from the garden, which he ate raw; oats and other grain; and he quaffed great quantities of wine. Shortly after his arrival, in order to please him, Mrs. Calander became a vegetarian. And in all things she deferred to the brute's tastes. Of all this, Mr. Calander was pleasantly indulgent, and ordered that Charity and the other servants should obey his wife's wishes to the letter. He (deluded man) also harkened to her whim for secrecy. Ada was afraid that, if the presence of Horace upon the plantation became known, crowds of strangers would come there to see him; and she dreaded this more than any one other thing, as her devotion was touching. Never did mortal woman lavish such tender affection upon an animal as did Mrs. Calander upon that beast. According to Charity Jimmeson, she had met him nearly a year before in the

deepest part of the swamp behind the house, and had, with infinite tenderness, formed a friendship with him, taming him from his wild state. She even taught him to talk, but as French was the language they used, and as he seldom spoke except in that language, which Charity did not understand, she can offer but few direct quotations.

He mooned all day before Mrs. Calander, nuzzling her shoulder, or eating sugar from her fingers. Together they would go into the woods, leaving the house in the early morning, taking a picnic lunch under the trees in distant parts of the estate; and together they would return at twilight. Sometimes she rode upon his back, sitting sideways, her arm around his neck.

On one such occasion, Charity Jimmeson says, she saw Mr. Calander, who was watching from the dining-room window, turn away and cover his face with his hand.

In the following year, Mrs. Calander's dreaminess increased and she seemed to suffer from melancholy. She hardly allowed her husband to touch her hand, nowadays, and aside from playing upon the piano, she did little. She never read or studied now—save to read French poems to Horace, who did not appear to understand. Sometimes they played at croquet upon the lawn, or tossed quoits; or, reclining under a tree, played at chess or at cards—"Pope Joan" being their favorite game. All visitors were rigidly excluded from the grounds. Signs were posted, "Trespassers will be Prosecuted," (a very unusual thing in Louisiana in those days of fox hunting). When a caller came, Horace was hidden away. The old Negress tells of one such occasion, when the Centaur pranced about the polished floor of the guest bed-chamber where he had been concealed, until the visitor (Mrs. James Branch, of Mimosa) asked what animal was parading in the house, and demanded to see for herself. In her testimony, which is appended to these notes, she tells of Mrs. Calander's fear and rage, and of the summary dismissal of the guest from the plantation house, which Mrs. Branch says she felt very keenly.

A tension of ever-increasing nervousness seemed to invade the hitherto peaceful spot. All the servants felt it, and this

sense of brooding tragedy worried poor Charity Jimmeson so, that she became cross and irritable, and upon one summer's night, lost her temper and gave notice, despite the fact that she had been with the Weatherford family for more than twenty years.

It was eight o'clock, and the family was assembled at the long table, dining by candle light. Mr. Calander, who appeared on the verge of a nervous breakdown, spoke sharply to Charity for the first time in his life: "Do as you please," he said, "But for the love of God, be quiet now!" Nothing more than that, and the words hardly louder than a whisper. Mrs. Calander, showing only the slightest interest in the affair, continued calmly eating white grapes, and sipping, now and then, from her glass of wine. Opposite her, Horace pawed the floor at intervals, quivering with impatience to have done and begone into the moonlit woods. He took his meals with the family now, eating at one end of the long candlelighted table, using his fingers to convey the greens and grain to his mouth, but handling his thin wine glass with the greatest delicacy. In order to cover his nakedness, Ada Calander had designed a silken shirt which covered his torso, a shirt ending just where his man's anatomy joined the body of the horse. Sometimes she even dressed him in her husband's shirts, vests, collars and ties, and at these times, if one saw the upper part of Horace, one would have considered him the very handsomest man ever seen, were it not for his dilating nostrils, the nervous movements of his shoulders, and the wild, sidelong glance of those black eyes, when someone walked behind him.

But, upon the occasions of Horace donning masculine attire, Mr. Calander became so melancholy that he could hardly hold up his head; great sighs shook his frame, and tears were seen to stand in his eyes. But, according to Charity Jimmeson, he never reproved his wife for her adoration of this beast, but bore all her foibles with a true Christian fortitude. Charity believes that the man realized that he had married a mad woman, but even knowing this terrible fact, still loved her. Horace was the plaything of his wife, and that was enough for David Calander.

Charity was thinking of all this, she says, as she stood there, defiantly, on that hot August night, looking at the strange trio about the table. There was moonlight outside the windows, but there was thunder in the air, and the atmosphere was humid and heavy. The candle flames did not flicker, but rose straight up to prodigious heights. Mr. Calander, wearing an old-fashioned black stock about his neck, leaned forward, head on hand, gazing at the cloth, trying to control the quenching that seemed to shake him from head to foot. Horace, or that part of Horace that showed above the table's edge, was, like the master, in a strange state of agitation; his eyes roved toward the windows. Young Mrs. Calander, dressed in a pomegranate colored gown, cut like a riding habit—(a style she wore almost always, now) sat leaning white arms upon the damask, a grape against her lips; her eyes looked dreamily into the candle flames. In the doorway stood Charity, the gaunt old Negress, sullen and baffled.

With an effort, the master broke the long silence with a bit of trivial conversation: "I saw a beautiful mare in the lane as I came in tonight, Ada," he said. "Never have I seen a more beautiful animal—white, graceful, almost like a creature from another world . . ." His eyes moved toward Horace, who was listening intently and whose nervousness seemed to have vanished under the even flow of words. "An exquisite, slim white mare, grazing in the moonlight . . ." David Calander continued.

His eyes went back to his wife, who had paused with another grape half-way to her lips and with a look of horror in her eyes. For Horace, with a terrible deliberation, was divesting himself of his silken shirt. Slowly he slipped it from his shoulders, and it fell to the floor; his creamy flesh was seen gleaming in the candleshine.

Ada Calander rose from her place, her chair falling over with a loud noise on the polished floor: "Horace!" she cried. But the Centaur, with one bound of his muscled body, was gone through a window, out into the moonlit world beyond. They heard the clattering of hoofs as he crossed a bridge over the bayou which divided the flower garden from the

lane. She stood like a woman stricken, her arms outstretched.

That, according to Charity, was the real beginning of Ada Calander's insanity, for she shrieked like a woman possessed. She fell fainting to the floor, pulling with her the damask cloth, and upsetting the candles, so that the only light was of the moon which shone in at the long windows. Her husband was near madness himself, with the excitement and sorrow for what his wife had come to; and through a remark of his, made in all idleness. But, upon recovering her wits, she would not have it so. He had done it on purpose, she declared, and she moaned for Horace to return to her; and her moans turned to screams when she realized that he was away from her side, traipsing after a strange white mare.

All night long she mourned and cried, and finally fell into so deep a swoon that her life was despaired of, and old Charity Jimmeson was sent, riding a mule, to fetch a doctor from Mimosa. The man of medicine arrived at sunrise, and found the lady asleep, worn out from hysteria; and he found her good, kind husband verging on madness, too. He prescribed sleeping draughts and soothing medicines, and went away, shaking his head, but promising to return late in the afternoon.

Along about midday, the lady began to call again for her pet Centaur, and Charity, relenting a little, and despairing for her mistress's reason otherwise, went in search of the animal, but could find no trace of him. She did find hoof-prints—of two horses, so she swears—in a flower bed, and followed the tracks a ways, but lost them again, a little further along, where the garden joined the woodland.

The madness of the lady progressed, it seemed, by leaps and bounds. Now she clung to her husband, sobbing and begging him to save her from imaginary terrors; now she pushed him aside, crying for her brute; again she shrieked her hate, and cursed her spouse for deliberately winning her pet away from her, swearing that her husband was a scheming hypocrite and a vile villain. At other times they clung together like frightened children; and so they were at twi-

light when the physician returned. And again the doctor departed, shaking his head.

At midnight the lady's moans became so piteous that her husband put aside all thought of self and went forth into the darkness in search of the Centaur; but though he searched until sunrise, neither hide nor hair of the rascal did he discover, save a few glossy strands from his tail, caught in a yellow rosebush.

But, on the second day, in the depths of the wildwood, the master found him, lying as snug as you please, under a tree, the Centaur's arm around the throat of the white mare. David Calander promised Horace anything if the beast would only return to the house again, even going so far as to say that the mistress would die if he refused. But Horace was proud and coquettish, and would come only on condition that the mare come too. And so it was arranged. For, after all, the master reasoned, there was no surer way of curing his fair wife's infatuation than by letting her see the true nature of the beast.

So the mare was put into the pasture and Horace came back into the drawing room once more; but he was vague and distant. In the midst of Ada's fondest protestations of affection, he would turn deliberately and gaze from the window to where the white mare was feeding contentedly in the field; and he spent hours in making chains of flowers which he strung about the mare's neck, chiding her playfully when she did but devour them.

Within the house Ada pined, miserably sick for her fabulous companion, but too proud, now, to enter into contest with Alice, the mare, (for so Horace called her).

And so the thing continued, week in, week out. And so great was John David Calander's love for his wife, that he pined with her, feeling, no doubt, that Horace had played a scurvy trick upon her, in so treating the love and affection that she lavished upon him. In vain, however, did the master use all his logic and oratory to reconcile his spouse to the perfidy of the Centaur. She did but moan in reply, and kept to her bed.

In the late Fall, (November 22, to be exact) she arose and

began to go about the house and grounds as usual. But, according to the old Negress's story, there burned an unholy light in her eyes. She became friendly with the mare, bringing her sugar and oats, and even offering her nosegays of flowers from the garden; all of which the mare received with scant appreciation; for she was a thankless wench, coming from God knows where, and thinking nothing of all the love and affection that the Centaur lavished upon her. She seemed unutterably bored, and would not lift her head when Horace came whinnying toward her, but seemed to prefer the porringer of oats that Ada brought, to all his love-making.

It was in November, as I have said, that Ada Calander rose from her bed. It was the day before Thanksgiving that she prepared a silver bowl of grain for the mare. Although Charity Jimmeson suspects that poison was added to the oats, she has no direct means of knowing; but certain she is that shortly after this, the mare fell sick and died, miserably and in great pain. So it was, that Horace came back to live in the house once more.

News of these strange doings, however, had filtered somehow into the town of Mimosa, and it came to pass that a mass-meeting was held, and a body of citizens, headed by the Mayor and the Baptist minister, came a-riding to the plantation one sunny winter afternoon, to see for themselves what strange thing this was. But a Negro servant, meeting them in the lane, had made a short cut through the fields, and arriving at the house before them, had given the alarm. When the men arrived, expecting they knew not what, they found only an empty house. Both mistress and Centaur were missing.

Great was the agony of John David Calander when he returned home at dusk to find the house deserted, and the iron safe in the library standing open. For, in her flight upon the Centaur's back, Ada Calander had seen fit to take a bag of gold with her—and was gone without leaving a trace. Although dogs were brought out by the master of the house, the trail was lost in the quagmires which lay some miles back of the plantation house.

Ten days later, Mr. Calander was found dead upon his bed, a pistol clasped in his hand; and the red hole in his breast told that his aim had been true. When his will was opened, it was found that he had left his entire estate to his wife, should she see fit to claim it at any time.

There were rumors that Ada Calander and the Centaur were seen in New Orleans, and elsewhere, but they were only vague reports; upon investigation, I have been unable to find one person, save Miss Amelie Boudousquie (and her mother) who saw them. And even Miss Boudousquie's testimony is a trifle disappointing in its incompleteness.

Now Ada Calander fled from the plantation on February 14th, 1885, but on May 24th, she returned to Mimosa just at dusk, bringing with her a large packing case which she had transported immediately to the country estate. Aside from her hurried passage (heavily veiled) through Mimosa, she has not been seen by the townspeople from that day to this. A few who dared call were dismissed at the door with the news that the lady was indisposed. And some boys of the town, inspired by curiosity, who crept to the garden after nightfall, saw the mistress weeping over a new-made grave under a magnolia tree. She lived and died alone, it is understood, with only a few servants around her; and I believe that I was the only guest admitted to the parlor of the house prior to her death.

Becoming interested in the strange stories which seemed to grow as the years passed, I decided, in the interest of my scientific work, to brave the lady in her home, and try to set these wild rumors at rest. I thought by careful explanation, I could convince the unhappy woman of my impersonal interest in her story. So, in the Spring of 1905, I made a pilgrimage to the Weatherford plantation.

I had considerable difficulty in getting there, for in the two decades which had passed since she had taken refuge, the foliage had grown densely in the lane which formed an avenue from the public road to the edge of the flower garden. I took with me on this visit, my daughter, Mildred-Virginia Fleming, who was most anxious to see the quaint old place of which she had heard so many romantic stories. My

daughter was at that time, a young lady of 19 summers, a scholar and student as well, and as interested as I in the pathological features of the unfortunate woman's history.

I regret to say that the visit was without scientific import, aside from one chance remark which the lady let fall at the close of the conversation—But I progress too rapidly with my story.

We approached the house, I repeat, with some difficulty, owing to the heavy underbrush which had grown up in the roads leading to it. For some time I debated taking the less arduous road, which ran around the garden and ended at the quarters of the Negroes in the rear; but finally I discarded this idea as undignified and unsportsmanlike. My daughter and I left the surrey in the lane, being unable to pass a large clump of canes which had grown across the driveway, and proceeded on foot. After a walk of half an hour or more, we reached the garden gate, now overgrown with ivy, and made our way inside. The garden had been allowed to run wild; roses were drowned in masses of weeds; a tangle of vines festooned themselves from tree to tree; and the two magnolias beside the entrance were covered with scarlet trumpet vines, the flowers vivid against the gray of the trailing Spanish moss. The steps had rotted away, and we were forced to climb upon the front porch with some difficulty. A startled man-servant, an aged Negro, met us at the door, with uplifted arm and scowling face; but finally, after a generous bribe and a long explanation, he consented to inform his mistress that we were at the door. I can hardly explain the strange trepidation that I felt as we waited there upon that mouldering veranda, listening to the shuffling feet of the old man as he departed to some distant wing of the house. After a long time he returned, telling us that his mistress would see us.

Now, as Ada Weatherford Calander was born in 1864, and this was the year of Our Lord 1905, I knew that the lady could not be more than 41 years old, and was profoundly shocked to see a woman old and bent, a woman so weakened and debilitated that she seemed unable to rise from her chair as we entered. From her appearance I should have judged

her to be 70 years of age. She was seated in a tattered armchair in a corner of a vast and almost empty room at the back of the house, a study or library, I surmised, by the bookcases which reached from floor to ceiling; a room once lovely, doubtless, but now fallen into a dirty and slovenly state, owing, most likely, to the increasing sluttishness of its mistress.

The old blue-stockings was surrounded with open books, large volumes of scientific works, it appeared, and, at her elbow beside the open window, stood a large telescope. Sky-maps were hanging on the walls, and I noticed that one of them, just behind her chair, had the constellation Sagittarius outlined in red chalk or crayon. There were spider webs everywhere and the floor was deep in dust, the dust being particularly noticeable, as the boards were scarred deep, as though by the prancing of a horse, or other animal.

She was civil, but distant, and the haughty demeanor that I had heard described so many times, had fallen from her. She asked me, briefly, to state my business and be gone; and, I regret to say, she offered us neither chairs nor refreshment after our wearisome journey.

With some hesitation, I asked her if she had once possessed a pet Centaur, and awaited her answer with eagerness. I expected either vehement denial, or polite acquiescence, but I was totally unprepared for the answer: "Ah, I do not remember . . ." which drifted like a mere thread of sound from her lips. So astounded was I, that I motioned to my daughter Mildred-Virginia to divert her with polite conversation while I prepared for further questioning. But my daughter's pleasant chit-chat seemed to fall upon deaf ears. The old lady sat peering forward with her short-sighted eyes, and seemed to hear nothing. Only once did she make a response to a girlish statement from my daughter, relative to her own lack of interest in men (which Mildred-Virginia meant well enough, I am sure, but in which I detected a curious mental connection with the subject uppermost in our thoughts). My daughter said, if I remember correctly: "Men have but little interest for me; I do not believe I shall ever marry!" or a similar, sweeping statement, such as young

girls are prone to utter. And Mrs. Calander, seeming to rouse from a reverie, said then in a faraway voice: "Ah, my dear, wait until the right horse comes along!"

At my daughter's surprised shriek: "What did you say, madam?" the old lady, suddenly becoming infuriated, ordered our instant departure from the premises, screaming in a raucous voice for the servants to eject us without further ado.

We left hastily, through the same corridor as we entered, descended from the rotting porch, and began our passage down the overgrown walk. However, my eye alighting upon a grave under a tree, I signalled my daughter to read the inscription upon the headstone, which stood clear of the grass. She read the following: "In Memory of My Beloved Horace" and below, the year of his death, 1885, but no further date was given, nor the place of his death. But, lower still, was this inscription in Gothic script: "His soul goes whinnying down the wind." (My daughter is quite positive that she read it correctly.)

She had no more than finished reading, when two fierce dogs were upon us, and my daughter was severely bitten upon the thigh,—a wound which, despite the good cause in which it was received, gave her considerable pain and annoyance afterward. The graceless behavior of Mrs. Calander so injured our dignity that we left immediately, hastening back to the surrey in the lane.

I intended to make a report of the vicious dogs to the town authorities at Mimosa, but my daughter dissuaded me, saying that, after all, we had been told to leave, and that we had no proof that the dogs had been set upon us at the old lady's order. All of which was right and proper.

This brings my report to a close, except to add that Ada Weatherford Calander died the following Autumn, September 4, 1905; and her property reverted to some distant cousinry of her husband's in Virginia, relatives who subsequently sold the property to an organization of business men. The Mimosa Country Club stands today upon the site of the Weatherford plantation house. The grave of Horace, unfortunately, has been leveled and the stone lost or thrown

away. However, appended to this testimonial, is the report of the old stone cutter of the town, which bears out my statement as to the inscription.

In this chronicle, I have done my best to point out the facts as I found them and to steer away from any hint of the religious intolerance with which the Calander case is wrapped in Louisiana, and which will be made clear by the affirmations and disavowals in the sworn statements appended to this paper.

(Signed) MATTHEW A. FLEMING, M.A., Ph.D.

Testimony of Mother St. Abraham, Superior of nuns of the Mater Dolorosa Convent, Mimosa, Louisiana.

Inasmuch as I feel it my duty to our Holy Order and to our Divine Savior, to set at rest persistent rumors pertaining to Ada Weatherford, (afterward Ada Weatherford Calander) and her nativity, I will state, here in the presence of Judge James G. Blount and other witnesses, that the rumor that this child was the daughter of a nun, is a most outrageous falsehood, spread no doubt, by those Black Protestants who are so eager to cast a blot upon the fair name of Catholicism. As a matter of fact, the child was found in a basket, perfectly nude and quite cold, in the doorway of the Convent on June 3, 1864, evidently abandoned there by some poor lost soul, who knew that our Holy Order could not refuse such a sacred charge. I was a very young nun at that time, and it was my duty to wash and dress the baby. I remember distinctly that the child appeared to be about three months old. She was a beautiful baby, always strong and well. Despite the fact that there was no clew as to her parentage, she was treated exactly as all of our orphans are treated, with love and kindness. She was baptised, of course, into the Roman Catholic Church. She was unusually intelligent. At the age of six, she knew the Catechism by heart and was fitted to make her First Communion, but was not allowed to do so, because of her youth. A prettier child I have never seen, always light-hearted and gay, and full of love and affection. So she was when adopted

by Mr. Alphonse Adams Weatherford, who came to our Convent in 1870, with the avowed intention of adopting a child for his wife, she being childless. Because of her winsomeness, they chose Ada—for so we called her, having christened her in honor of Saint Adaline of the Blessed Palms.

I never saw her again after her adoption, nor did any of the Sisters of our Order, and it is ridiculous to suppose that her early training had anything to do with her behavior afterward,—if bad it was. Is it not more likely that, living as she did, in a worldly household, she forgot her early teachings, and therefore wandered away from the righteousness of her upbringing? Mr. Weatherford, I have been informed, was an Episcopalian, and David Calander, the man she married, was a Baptist.

(Signed) MOTHER ST. ABRAHAM.

Testimony of Mrs. James Branch, of Mimosa, pertaining to the peculiar behavior of Mrs. Calander on July 14, 1884.

I had known John Calander all of my life. We were childhood friends, you might say, and it was perfectly natural that I should try to be nice to his wife, although I had never known Ada Weatherford in her unmarried days. People said she was very odd and studious, and did not care to mingle with the people of Mimosa, and I for one, have never cared for those who hold themselves better than others. Nevertheless, I deemed it my duty to visit her after her marriage, and so I did. I found her pleasant enough, and very pretty, but she certainly was an affected woman, if there ever was one. For instance, she would say something perfectly extraordinary, in a perfectly serious manner, and then, just as you got your breath to answer her, you would see that she had gone off into a sort of day dream—yes, a regular trance, right in the middle of the conversation. In addition to the things about her that I didn't like, she refused point-blank to join the Ladies-Aid, and so I left, rather irritated, and declared to my husband that night that I would never set foot in her house again. However,

later on, during her so-called "indisposition," I felt it my duty as a Christian to forgive and forget, and so I went, on July 14, 1884, to the Weatherford plantation, driving out in my phaeton in the afternoon. I found her in a highly nervous state, and she hardly listened to my polite inquiries relative to her health. She appeared to be listening to strange sounds that came from an adjoining room, a stamping and pawing,—exactly as though a horse was there in the guest bedroom. As I had heard some mighty funny stories about that woman, I thought I would just ask her straight out what sort of pet she had in the house,—and so I did. She did not answer immediately, and so I repeated the question, adding in a friendly tone: "Oh, do let me see!" rising as I spoke, and making a movement toward the closed door. At this, she flew into a rage, and ordered me out of the house. Naturally I never returned to it. I've always told my husband that if he had been any kind of a man at all he would have had it out with David Calander; but he refused to take any part in the controversy. This was one of the things that led to our divorce, later on, but that is aside from the story of Ada Calander. I have said, and said repeatedly, that I knew she kept a horse in her bedroom, but I never said I saw a Centaur there,—for, as a matter of fact, I do not believe that they exist, save in the diseased imaginations of insane and heathen peoples. It is my opinion that the story is all rot, and that Ada Calander was merely a crazy woman who took delight in driving her poor husband to suicide by her manias for animals. And that's all I've got to say about her!

(Signed) JESSIE MAYO BRANCH (Mrs. James Branch).

Testimony of Miss Amelie Boudousquie, of New Orleans, with particular reference to the Centaur's one appearance in the city.

I first met Mrs. Calander in February, 1882, when she came to New Orleans on her honeymoon. Her husband was an old friend of my mother's family, the Beaumonts. I called to see her at the St. Charles Hotel, taking my mother

with me, of course; and later on, we had them to dinner at our house on Esplanade Avenue. I found her a very pretty woman, and quite witty, speaking French almost flawlessly, which pleased my mother very much. One afternoon, when calling at the hotel to take her for a drive in our carriage, I found her in a passion of tears, *pauvre enfant*, because she had just received the news of her foster-father's death. Despite the fact that she was his sole heir, she was deeply grieved, I am sure, and so I told Mama when I went home. I took her and her husband to the steamboat landing in our family barouche, instead of taking them upon the pleasant drive that we had anticipated.

Imagine my surprise, then, three years later, to see her in a box at the French Opera, where I had gone with Mama to witness a performance of "Faust," the favorite opera of all my family. I had been chatting with some friends in one of the proscenium boxes, when I gave a cry of surprise, recognizing Mrs. Calander and a gentleman in a box nearby. Accordingly, as is our free and easy custom in Nouvelle Orleans, I rapped lightly with my knuckles upon the door of the box, and walked in. Almost immediately, I regretted taking the liberty, for I saw at once that the gentleman with her was not her husband, but a total stranger to me! He was standing in the back of the box, partly behind her chair, and he only bowed deeply when I spoke to him and offered my hand. As he was a very handsome man, I was somewhat chagrined because he did not say something complimentary to me, and I looked at him very closely. I tell you there was something funny about that man! He was dressed in evening clothes, but the lower part of him was covered with a big black curtain! This apron struck me as odd, but being a true Creole lady, I did not mention it. She, poor thing, appeared so distraught, so nervous, so worried by my entrance into the box, that I felt I had committed a faux pas in coming in at all. And it dawned upon me, suddenly, that there was more in this visit to the opera than appeared on the surface. "Aha!" I thought, "what is this? A liaison? A rendezvous? Perhaps, who can tell?"

Upon my return to our box, just at the beginning of the

last act, I communicated my impression to Mama, who shared my curiosity. Accordingly, we decided to watch them leave the theater. Ah yes, we planned it all out together, so that our actions should not appear indiscreet. At the final curtain, we hastened from our places and took our stand at one of the exits quite near their box, knowing that they would have to pass by us on the way out. Minutes went by and they did not come. "Now that is odd!" said Mama. The theater emptied gradually, and a man began to turn out the gas lights in the chandeliers, when I saw Ada Calander peeping out from between the curtains of the box. As she had seen us, no doubt, as we were the only ones left in the theater, I felt I could stand there no longer with any sort of propriety. So Mama and I went outside and took our places under a darkened arcade in Toulouse Street. Gradually, the street emptied, and just as I thought that the guilty couple had given us the slip, I saw her emerge from the door, wearing a purple dolman. She was alone, and she stood there, looking to the right and left; then she motioned someone within, and presently a strange figure appeared. Outlined in the door, I saw plainly, a tall man with a high silk hat, wearing, to my amazement, a long, trailing cloak which fell to the ground all around, and, dragging behind him a body, an appendage resembling the hindquarters of a quadruped. "What horror!" I said to Mama, "She is taking some deformed relative to the Opera and is ashamed of being seen!" But just as I was about to run across the street and offer her a seat in our carriage, a preposterous thing happened. The gentleman, who had been descending the steps with extreme difficulty, suddenly whisked off the cloak, and revealed that he was not a man at all, but a horse! Without a word, Mrs. Calander vaulted lightly upon his back, and he started at a gallop out Toulouse Street, toward Lake Pontchartrain. I could not believe my eyes, and my hysterical screams attracted a policeman, who, I regret to say, did not believe my story and refused to give chase.

(Signed) AMELIE BOUDOUSQUIE.

Testimony of the Reverend J. J. McBryde of Mimosa.

I never saw Mrs. Calander but twice in my life, once when I married her to her husband, and again when I made it my business to go to the Weatherford home to remonstrate with her for her alleged outrageous behavior; for, as I said to myself: "Where there's smoke, there's bound to be fire!" And there were many scandalous stories afloat in Mimosa concerning her,—stories that blackened her name, and besmirched the honor of her husband, who, prior to his marriage, had been a member of my church. Of her marriage day, it is unnecessary to speak; but of the call I made on February 2nd, 1885, I have a very distinct and unpleasant impression, even after all these years.

After the long drive in my buggy, I was very angry when the servant who had admitted me to the parlor, returned and said that his mistress begged to be excused, as she was very busy. Now, as I sat waiting, I had been profoundly shocked by an obscene picture on the wall¹ and at a bronze statue² of a half-man, half-beast, called a Centaur, I understand, who carried a naked woman upon his back. So, I walked right past that impudent nigger, and entered the library which was in the back part of the house. There she sat, all alone at a table, reading a book! Reading! Wasting her time with some vile trash, doubtless, and refusing the Minister when he came to call!

"Madam!" I said, "what is the meaning of that dirty picture in your drawing room? And that indecent statue? What is your husband thinking of to allow you to have such vile things in his house?"

"I haven't an idea what you mean," she drawled at me, looking at me with those mocking, hypocritical, *Catholic* eyes of hers. And so I told her how depraved her taste appeared to a respectable person like myself. Especially that statue of the man with a beast's body.

"But what is your objection to my Centaur?" she asked.

I then pointed out that the thing was impossible, abnor-

¹ A reproduction of the painting by Paul Veronese of "Europa." The original is in the Doges' Palace at Venice, Italy.

² By Clodion.

mal, and perverse. Such things never existed at any time, I told her.

She caught at the word "abnormal."

"For that matter," she said, "even Angels cannot be said to be wholly normal, you know, according to your standards, Mr. McBryde, as they are always pictured as having both the bodies of men and the wings of birds. Do you know," she continued in her slow drawling voice, "the problem of their comfort when sleeping has often stirred my wonder. Do they, do you suppose, lie down to rest, as human beings do, or do Angels roost, like chickens, in the trees?"

"Blasphemer!" I shouted, "You'll burn in hell for this!" And turning upon my heel, I quitted the room and the house.

When I returned, white and shaken, to Minosa, I took the matter up with the Mayor, who agreed with me that such a woman was a menace to the morals of the community. Accordingly a secret meeting was held, and a group of men went to the plantation one afternoon, in the absence of her husband (for he was not a party to her outrageous behavior). We had no intention of doing her bodily harm, but we intended to throw the fear of God into her heart. A nigger servant gave her the warning of our approach, however, and she escaped on horseback. But our little group destroyed the sinful picture and the statue, and gave that nigger a good whipping to teach him not to interfere with Southern justice.

I feel that I have done my duty, and I am not ashamed of it. If more men would take the stand that I do, there would be less laxity in Louisiana.

(Signed) REV. J. J. MCBRYDE.

Testimony of Adolph Wunsch, an aged stone-cutter of Mimosa, La., relative to the tombstones ordered in advance by John David Calander.

I, Adolph Wunsch, being in a sane state of mind, do appear and solemnly swear that the following is true:

Sometime in the early Spring of 1885, Mr. J. D. Calander came into my shop and said that he would like to order two

tombstones for the family lot in Mimosa Cemetery; one for himself and one for his wife; something neat but costly, he said, with a simple design, and a place for a short epitaph. I wondered what was up, as both he and his wife were well at that time, for all I knew; but as he paid cash down, and I was in need of money just then, I only thanked God for his foolishness, and wished that more men would order their tombstones in advance.

Well, sir, he picked out two headstones, exactly alike, and had me carve on them. His name on one, and his wife's name on the other. On his, he ordered the date of his birth, and had a place left for the date of his death. The same on hers, he said. But in the empty space at the bottom, he ordered, on his: "He did his best to understand, and failing, died." But on hers, he had a more flighty inscription, if you will excuse my way of speaking. On hers he had carved: "She was carried away by her hobby; but for all her strangeness, she was a charming woman." And so I cut it on the stone. You'll find them both in the Mimosa Cemetery, if you care to look for them.

(Signed) ADOLPH WUNSCH.

MARK VAN DOREN

END OF TRAVEL

Here in a circle of maples I can sit
Half of a day in the sun, and before and after
Figure the speed of shadows; eastward, westward—
Going or coming—all of the shade is one.
Night, the centerless circle, widening, leaves
Me and the bounded brightness, whence I watch
Birds, coming and going—westward, eastward—
Clouds, and the smallest of all my circles, the sun.
Beyond this rounded silence there is nothing.
Roads go to the tops of hills and over,
Over to Canaan and over to all of the Cornwalls—
Eastward, westward, on to the two grey oceans.
For me they end on the hills.

And now there rises
Thunder of cars that pass below on the pike.
They pass, are gone; and still the Hollow is sounding.
Round and round it runs—the prisoned thunder—
Higher and higher yet in the curving trees.
I listen and follow, and laugh as the feet grow tired,
Falter, and stumble, and enter the death of hills.
Beyond there is crying of trains that people have taken,
Pointing them straight to the West. I do not listen.
Rim of the world, that cry is yours to devour.
Here am I nourished enough—remembering only
Men long gone who, never considering circles,
Straightened their eyes and pointed their steps to the West.

Through a cool
And speckled wood,
Where unseen
An Indian stood

And asked the meaning
Of their eyes,
They followed hot
Upon the cries

Of men ahead,
Whose going warmed
Paths no feet
Had ever formed;

And there were other
Heels behind
That trod the moss
And left it blind;

Until there ran
A stiffened road
To where the first
River flowed.

Silver it came—
Lazily, widely, down from the North;
And one on a raft put forth
And gave it a name.

Word flew back—
Flushing the faces of men in file;
And, trotting the ultimate mile
Of the shadowy track,

Ten of them shouted—
Bringing the ferry again to the shore.
They crossed; and again there were more.
And some of them doubted;

Two of them turned—
Talking together of East and Home.

But there was the river in foam,
And both of them burned

New now with desire—
Looking across where the water was walled
Once more with a wood, that called
Their feet to the fire

Laid far in the West—
Waiting for these who would touch it to flame. . . .
So on, and ever the same,
And never a rest.

So over the biggest of rivers
And on to the plains—
Under a sun whose shadows
Were yellowing stains

On the green of the grass, and the white
Of the desert beyond;
At evening it reddened the world,
And the goers were fond

Of saying that this was the fire,
That this was the end—
Only a hundred mountains
Now to ascend,

Only a hundred valleys,
And there it would wait:
Faggot and leaf and log
On an altar of fate.

The feet and the eyes drew on
Till the ocean was there.
Then silence. The hills were asleep,
And the beaches were bare,

And the sun going down in the sea
Went utterly out.
And the travellers looked at each other
And turned about.

Here in the circle of maples where I am standing
Only the bodies come back of these long gone.
Thinly they walk in the shade, and thinly endeavor,
Turning, to keep to the West. But they have lost it;
And so all afternoon I will see them circling—
Birds with a wounded wing—and never at rest.
The thoughts of a traveller never can curve and return.
Only the body comes back of one long gone
Straightly and far away. And bodies discover
Death in the hills, and death in a circle of sound.

ARCHIBALD MacLEISH

FRAGMENT OF A BIOGRAPHY

TO ERNEST HEMINGWAY

NIGHT after night I lie like this listening.
Night after night I cannot sleep. I wake
Knowing something, thinking something has happened.
I have this feeling a great deal. I have
Sadness often. At night I have this feeling.
Waking I feel this pain as though I knew
Something not to be thought of, something unbearable.
I feel this pain at night as though some
Terrible thing had happened. At night the sky
Opens, the near things vanish, the bright walls
Fall, and the stars were always there, and the dark
There, and the cold, and the stillness. I wake and stand
A long time by the window. I always think
The trees know the way they are silent. I always
Think someone has spoken, someone has told me.
Reading the books I always think so, reading
Words overheard in the books, reading the words
Like words in a strange language. I always hear
Music like that. I almost remember with music. . . .
This is not what you think. I am not that. I swim
Every day at the beach under the fig tree.
I swim very well and far out. The smell
Of pine comes over the water. The wind blurs
Seaward. And afternoons I walk to the Phare.
Much of the time I do not think anything;
Much of the time I do not even notice—
And then, speaking, closing a door, I see
Strangely, as though I almost saw now, some
Shape of things I have always seen, the sun
White on a house and the windows open and swallows
In and out of the wallpaper, the moon's face

Faint by day in a mirror; I see some
Changed thing that is telling, something that almost
Tells—and this pain then, then this pain. And no
Words, only these shapes of things that seem
Ways of knowing what it is I am knowing.
I write these things in books, on pieces of paper.
I have written, "The wind rises. . . ." I have written, "Bells
Plunged in the wind. . . ." I have written, "Like
Doors. . . ." "Like evening. . . ."
It is always the same: I cannot read what the words say.
It is always the same: there are signs and I cannot read them.
There are empty streets and the blinds drawn and the sky
Sliding in windows. There are lights before
Dawn in the yellow transoms over the doors.
There are steps that pass and pass all night that are always
One, always the same step passing. . . .
I have travelled a great deal. I have seen at Homs
The cranes over the river and Isfahan
The fallen tiles in the empty garden, and Shiraz
Far off, the cypresses under the hill.
It is always the same. I have seen on the Kazvin road
On the moon grey desert the leafless wind,
The wind raging in moon dusk. I have seen a light come
Seaward with slow oars from the mouth of Euphrates.
I have heard the nightingales in the thickets of Gilan,
And at dawn, at Teheran, I have heard from the ancient
Westward greying face of the wandering planet
The voices calling the small new name of god,
The voices answered with cockcrow, answered at dusk
With the cry of jackals far away in the gardens.
I have heard the name of the moon beyond those mountains.
It is always the same. It is always as though some
Smell of leaves had made me not quite remember;
As though I had turned to look and there were no one.
It has always been secret like that with me.
Always something has not been said. Always
The stones were there, the trees were there, the motionless
Hills have appeared in the dusk to me, the moon
Has stood a long time white and still in the window.

Always the earth has been turned away from me hiding
The veiled eyes, and the wind in the leaves has not
spoken. . . .

As now the night is still, as the night now
Stands at the farthest off of touch and like
A raised hand held upon the empty air
Means and is silent. (Look, it waves me still)
As now the whole night in the leaning room
Made visible behind this darkness seems
To beckon to me (On, I say Go on!
I'll follow thee) As the whole night now
Moves through these shadows and will never speak.
(I say, Away! Go on, I'll follow thee. . . .)

GEORGE O'NEIL

BRAVO

THE steep house in the Rue Galilee was always strange to Martin. Though he had only a vague remembrance of living in any other than this tall stone Parisian house, still, it remained in some odd way a house belonging to foreigners. And yet who but his father owned it? Martin knew that this notion of living in a stranger's house was just one of those curious ideas that made him seem queer and different to other people. He had never mentioned his feeling about the house to anyone. How could he describe the strange sensation he had every time Luce swung one of the heavy street doors and let him into the dark vestibule? He always felt as if he ought not climb the thickly carpeted stairs until someone had come granting him permission. Very often he wandered past the stairs when he came home from school, and pushing the glass doors that led into the great seldom-used room called, for some unexplained reason, the atelier, he would sit quietly a long time, dreaming, staring at the tall pictures of his French grandparents. These pictures were hung high on the red wall at the far end of the room, and the light that fell slantingly through the glass roof gave a vivid look to the dark bright eyes of these two people who stared back at the idle boy on the long satin couch. Martin had a way of persuading himself that the fierce-looking old lady with the red hair and green eyes sitting in the heavy gold frame was really no relation to him. The gentle face of her husband was friendlier. One could imagine a grandfatherly touch from those hands fingering the ivory knob of a thick walking stick. But Madame La Feuille,—Martin was half aware of a realization that the boring green eyes and that thin mouth drawn almost at right angle to a set of pendant earrings had something to do with his feeling about the house. Madame La Feuille's house in the Rue Galilee—that was where he lived. Didn't

the old charbonnier and his wife at the corner always speak of it so? Yet his name was *La Feuille*, too, and he had lived here nearly all his life. Sometimes, sitting alone in the great still atelier, he did his best to remember that other house—that house in America, far away, in the city where he had been born, his mother's city. He had only flashes of it in his mind, forming a picture like part of a dream. He saw a grassy slope, a big speckled dog, and then his grandmother—the real one—standing on a wide porch, beckoning to him. He could see himself in the picture, running up the steps, crying; and then his grandmother's soft hands were drawing him into a high-ceilinged room with a very shiny floor, and a white door was opening across the room and Cassie was coming toward him, old black Cassie. He saw the two women stroking his head, comforting him. His grandmother was telling him where his mother and father had gone. "To Paris—a beautiful city across the ocean. Your father's city." And he was to go there, too, later, his grandmother promised. They would all go. Cassie would be his nurse, still, in Paris. But Martin could see himself weeping bitterly and calling for his mother. Why had she not taken him with her? It had been explained to him that his father had wished to bring his wife alone to Paris, for a reason that was not too plain, it seemed, to anyone. Martin saw Cassie in the picture, at the end, consoling him in that room with a shining floor. Cassie was holding him on her lap and her apron was filled with cookies and she was handing him these—star cookies, she called them—one at a time.

Dim and far and strange it all seemed to Martin as he sat remembering. But he had come to Paris soon after that, and Cassie had come, too, and at this moment he knew she was in the court behind the house, tending her little garden of geraniums. Darling, that other grandmother, was dead. She was much farther away than *Madame La Feuille* though *Madame La Feuille* had been gone many years and Martin had never seen her. Nevertheless, there she was, his French grandmother, in the atelier, and Martin sometimes felt sure that she was listening in other rooms of the

high house, listening to him and his mother and Cassie as they talked to one another in English, the language that Martin thought of as the kind—*amiable*—language. It was not so fierce as French. French was smooth and light, like flowing water, but beneath it there was something stern. When Martin's father spoke to him angrily, it was in French; in indulgent, good-natured moods he used English. His father had learned to speak English very well those three years in the United States where he had lived with a sister married to an American. The three of them, his mother and Martin and Cassie, talked nearly always in English. Their voices rose and fell on an odd silence through the house. It was as though everyone disapproved. Martin could feel it. The idea that Madame La Feuille was listening was, of course, another of those notions—the sort he kept carefully secret. Notwithstanding, he permitted himself the fancy. Returning from school, he would stand in the lower hall, and as his mother's voice floated down the well of the stairway, her clear ringing tones in an English exclamation or question, then Martin could feel the silent disapproval: it was as if someone had stopped on the stairs and stood frowning at the sound of that strong clear voice ringing through the house.

Was she there? Martin would steal down the hall and push the glass doors cautiously ajar. Yes, Madame La Feuille was still in the atelier.

His mother had never said anything on the subject to him, but he sensed that she, too, was made a little uneasy by what he called the feeling of their house. There were times when he came upon her sitting idly in her room on the third floor, staring out through the tall casements, gazing blankly over the roofs and chimney-pots that lay in wide stretches, rolling far, toward the distant trees of the Bois. At such moments, the dark unseeing look in his mother's brown eyes troubled him greatly. He pressed her for a reason, an explanation of that mood, and nearly always she was annoyed by his insistence. To that degree, at least, he succeeded in dispelling her depression. It ended in a flash of irritation.

"Go up to your playroom. Go and help Cassie fix her flowers!"

Anything was better than that black look of loneliness in her eyes; so, seeing her rise and move vigorously about the room once more, Martin was content to suffer banishment. Down to the court he would take himself, to watch Cassie pottering with her little flower beds laid where some of the stone slabs had been pulled from the floor of the yard. Or perhaps Cassie was weaving a rug, one of her rag-rugs, and he would sit fascinated by her black fingers twisting the bright strips of cloth into a spiral pattern, listening to her peculiarly high, sweet treble telling again, an uncounted time, how it had been back there in that American city—in Darling's house. And as they sat together, Martin could hear Luce through a window, singing somewhere in the house, and though she sang a little waltz of the streets, her voice, to him, had an angry sound in it as it fell against the stone walls hemming them in.

In the house just behind them someone owned a parrot, and that parrot had a way of calling out as Cassie and Martin sat together in the court. Shrilly, the bird screamed down at them: "*Zut! Ecoutez!*" Then in an uncanny imitation of Cassie's thin soft voice it ran off a stream of English and American sounds. To Martin it was weird and terrifying for a bird to show such mischievousness. He listened spellbound. But Cassie would call back in a piping rage: "Just shut your mouth, you nasty French bird! Just shut your mouth!" And the parrot, crying "*Zut! Ecoutez!*" screamed with mocking nasal laughter. Sometimes Cassie rose in silence, heaving her wide old body into the house, and left Martin alone, listening to the weird bird, staring at the beds of rose and white geraniums so carefully tended in the court where the *Marchands* had worn their footsteps in a stone path to the kitchen door.

There was a summer morning when a very uncommon interruption called Martin from the little green iron chair where he had sat after one of Cassie's retreats, listening to the insolent parrot's raillery, marveling at the cruelty of it. One of the diningroom windows above the atelier had been

thrown open, and Martin's father was there, signaling mysteriously with his forefingers. What could it mean? Martin was unconvinced that this was a summons for his own company, and not until he saw his father's familiar gesture of annoyance—a quick tugging at his long moustache—did he rise to obey. He knew that this was the hour for his father's conversation with Monsieur Crevé. Monsieur Crevé was his father's best friend. "Mister La Fwee's crony" was what Cassie called this daily visitor to their house. And Monsieur Crevé's name was genuine—one of those instances of an odd name exactly describing the man. Monsieur Crevé was large and genial, with an unbelievable depth in his voice, and an extraordinary way of making everything he said sound a little comic, a little sweet, and a little sad, all at once. That, at any rate, was the effect his kindly speeches had for Martin. Monsieur Crevé would look at Martin and at Martin's mother with a deep sadness in his eyes and then he would say something very funny about Martin's father, forcing his friend to smile what to Martin seemed a chilly terrible smile. No two men could appear more unlike than those two. But Martin understood that the friendship had begun long ago, when there had been things that made them more alike than they appeared now. This he gathered from Cassie's knowing little speeches. In another sense, Monsieur Crevé's name suited him. "He used to be a rake," Cassie said. Martin found out what that meant. Now, certainly, his father's friend was dignified enough. "A match for your father's fine ways, when he wants to be," Cassie commented. But there was nothing cold or forbidding in Monsieur Crevé's dignity. Once a week a gift was left on a table in the salon for Martin, an amusing bit of a toy or a small box of candy. Monsieur Crevé laid it there and went away. No one intruded on the daily conversation in the large room overlooking the street. What they talked about after all these years puzzled Martin—and his mother, too. But there they sat for about half an hour in a pair of apricot brocade chairs; and between them on a Louis Philippe tabouret stood a bottle of *fin*, flanked by two tiny crystal

glasses. They smoked and prozed, as Martin's mother put it.

While he climbed the stairs that morning, answering the remarkable invitation to this ceremonious half-hour, Martin could hear Monsieur Crevé's voice croaking richly.

"She is a thoroughbred—*pur sang*," he was saying, "from an American string."

Hesitantly, Martin entered the room and submitted to the vigorous head-rubbing that was Monsieur Crevé's customary greeting. The fingers pressing in his hair were thick and strong, and Martin nearly always thought he would be forced to cry out under the pinching and pulling of that huge hand. Monsieur Crevé's eyes gave one the courage to stand until the kindly but terrible mauling was over.

"We are going to let you in on a secret," Martin's father addressed him in English. He paused and glanced at the doors. "Do you know where your mother is?"

Martin invented a shopping tour for his mother. He had seen her leave the house an hour before, and hanging from a fourth floor window, he had watched her turn in the direction of the Etoile. He was wholly ignorant of her destination and secretly curious, but he knew his father's ways. "Where is your mother?" Automatically Martin produced elaborate itineraries for her when the ominous question demanded them. But now he saw with relief that the inquiry was only a measure of precaution. What was the secret?

"We wish to surprise her. You know tomorrow is your mother's wedding anniversary."

Martin's enthusiasm surged. A present for his mother, something to make her voice ring out in that strong happy tone of surprise.

"Monsieur Crevé has helped me to find something which I believe your mother would be pleased to have."

Martin swung in excitement to his father's friend. "I know," he exclaimed. "It's a horse! You're going to let her have one at last!"

Monsieur Crevé looked sadly into Martin's eyes and nodded. "Another American has come to Paris," he said. "She is from Kentucky. Is Lexington a pleasant place?"

And did you ever hear of anyone there named Judge Quickly?"

Martin waited smilingly, familiar with Monsieur Crevé's playful method.

"It seems she is the daughter of Judge Quickly, a very famous gentleman."

Then his father explained in his formal English: "Monsieur Crevé knows a very rich American who wishes to dispose of some of his stables. He has seen a very fine mare there, descended from one of the great Kentucky race horses. Monsieur Crevé remembered your mother's love of horses and her desire for one. Tomorrow being the anniversary . . ."

The bell had rung below and they all listened in the salon. Recognizing the tap of his mother's heels on the stone margin of the stairs, Martin's heart began to pound in excitement.

"When will you tell her?" he demanded in a whisper, and his father silenced him, pointing his finger at the center of his long moustache. And at this moment Martin approved more than he ever had of the cold distant look in his father's green eyes. They were very nearly deep friends now, sharing this secret which was to gladden Martin's mother, to keep that darkness out of her brow and that slight droop from the corner of her broad beautiful mouth. Martin gathered the fringe of the satin stool where he had perched at Monsieur Crevé's feet, he twisted the heavy tassels, listening to the faint swish in the hall. And there she was, at last, standing in the door, her face a little pale under the wide black hat that dipped smartly forward on her highly dressed hair. How beautiful she was in the dark tailored suit with the long coat drawing her tall slenderness in military lines. To her son she seemed exquisitely strong and spirited, as if she held a depth of power in reserve beneath those fashionably severe clothes that became her so well. But now she appeared a little troubled, ill-at-ease, pausing at the room's entrance. Monsieur Crevé was moving slowly across to welcome her, but she had begun to withdraw. In a gesture of salute she half raised a light boa of feathers

that hung from her gloved hand. As she did this, Martin caught a vague purple flash under the feathers. Then she was gone. And Monsieur Crevé was croaking after her a deep objection to such desertion, but the only response was a diminishing rustle of skirts on the stairway.

Martin was sunken in disappointment, yet something else weighed even more heavily. Had that been a flash of orchids he had seen among the feathers? And was she really trying to hide them? And why should that seem strange—like trouble—to Martin?

"Where did you say your mother had gone?"

There was an edge in his father's question; it had been in French, and Martin answered him softly, hastily: "*A Madame Clotilde—the hairdresser.*"

His father had moved to the fireplace and Martin saw him flick his cigar ash sharply into the brazier. He stood frowning, his eyes intensely green, and with one thin hand he smoothed his pompadour of wiry red hair. Martin could see Madame La Feuille plainly in his father's face. He rose and started uneasily from the room. Monsieur Crevé pointed to a small package on a table near the door. Martin read a confectioner's name on the wrapping. He smiled his thanks.

"But wait," Monsieur Crevé called. "Don't you wish to know the name of the horse?"

Martin turned.

"A fine name for a thoroughbred from your Kentucky." He hung a period of suspense behind his statement. Martin was forced at last to press the silence.

"What is the horse's name, Monsieur Crevé?"

"Bravo," the deep voice pronounced richly. "A splendid name for a spirited animal, is it not? Bravo—daughter of Judge Quickly from America."

As Martin climbed the twisted flight of iron stairs that led to his playroom at the top of the house he had Monsieur Crevé's voice echoing in his mind. Yes, Bravo seemed a good name for a horse. He hoped it would make his mother happy to have a horse named Bravo.

On the wall of the playroom in this very old house there

was a system of marks and dates. It had been there a long time, Martin knew. It was a record of the size and age of all of Madame La Feuille's children and grandchildren. The figures had been carefully painted in broad brush-strokes in the past, by a vigorous hand. But Martin was keeping his own record himself, in lead-pencil. Today he straightened his body against the wall and glued his fingers over the top of his head. Then, biting his tongue, he printed in cautious script: MARTIN LA FEUILLE, JULY 1906, AGE 8. He glanced over his shoulder when he had done this. Did anyone else see these marks he made up here, all alone? He stood quietly. The house was listening below, the whole house was listening. Then, faintly, through a closed window came the call of the chair-mender from the street. Martin liked the cries of the vendors in Paris. They sounded friendly.

Monsieur La Feuille, having lived for three years in the United States, suffered the American breakfast habits to be practised in his house. His wife had never relaxed to the bitter coffee and the brittle roll offered at her bedroom door those few weeks, early in her marriage, when she had tried to do everything as it was done in Paris. "I'm no good until I get my breakfast in me." All his life Martin had heard his mother protesting. And she had instituted the full morning meal in the dark paneled diningroom. Under the strips of frescoing done but recently in the *nouveau art*, the small family began the day over beautifully iced melons or delicately powdered heaps of berries, to be followed by omelets and thin bacon, or on occasions such unbelievable morning dishes as sweetbreads—and even sausages. The breads that were served then were prepared by Cassie. Amelie, the cook, and Luce, had never lessened their manner of disdain for the moment that Cassie stepped to a little wooden table in their kitchen and commenced the fantastic manipulation of her doughs and batters. After six years of service in this household, the two Frenchwomen had a way of indicating, during the preparation of this meal, that those partaking of it were, for the time, mildly mad. Luce insinuated

a tone in her request down the dumbwaiter shaft that agreed beforehand with Amelie's amazed ejaculation: "*Encore du Kornbrad!*" But Cassie carved the toasted brown wheel in her pan, disregarding the look in Amelie's face as she held forward a napkin-lined silver basket,—that look which said plainly: "Barbarians! Indians! Savages!"

Martin loved breakfast, too. There was something about the morning, a feeling that delightful things might happen, while the sunlight was so soft and the air so cool and watery. Every day, by noon, that feeling had gradually vanished, but he always had it when he came into the room and climbed onto a dark church-like chair before the snowy round table. Summer mornings, dipping a spoon into a deep hill of red raspberries and crunching at the seeds while you listened to someone in the street playing a dance-tune on a violin—that was altogether delightful. But on the morning of his mother's wedding anniversary Martin was too excited to taste what he was eating. He chewed mechanically, keeping his eyes on his mother. She was very quiet. No one had mentioned the day as yet. When was the great surprise to come? Martin knew that his mother believed the day had been forgotten. Once when she bent her head, his father winked at him slowly and brushed his long moustache with his napkin. Martin didn't feel like smiling back. He wished his father would tell her. He was afraid there might be tears in his mother's eyes when she rose from the table.

For a reason he could never have given had he been asked for it, Martin had come to consider each anniversary of his parents' marriage as a kind of achievement, an event as creditable as attaining one's birthday every year when one had been impressed with the difficulty of such a performance. It seemed quite problematic to Martin that he would ever grow up. He was in the habit of saying: "If I should grow to be a man . . . If I should live . . ." Perhaps this sense of the hazards of existence had come from too close an attention to Cassie's faintly melancholy philosophy. Or maybe, Martin thought, everybody drew that feeling from the anxiety-laden air. At any rate, he believed you had only a fair chance of getting through the long gray tunnel of

childhood into the miraculous state of maturity. He felt that anything that endured was important for that fact alone. Consequently each wedding anniversary added to his mother's distinction in his eyes. As a matter of course, he gave the larger credit to her, and attended his father's annual oblation in a critical mood. The recognition should be sufficient. Sometimes the occurrence had been inadequately met. That coral necklace, year before last, Martin had marked a failure. Last year's gift, the pearl surrounded by diamonds in high prongs of gold for his mother's little finger, he acknowledged as worthy. This time he could not possibly object. For the heroic tenth anniversary his father had chosen a fitting reward. A horse,—that was absolutely correct.

Martin approved of his father more than he ever had, now. His mother had wanted a horse so long. Into Martin's mind flashed a parade of legendary steeds. He saw Alexander's great white Bucephalus, and even an image of Pegasus prancing slowly in fine harness down the Champs Elysées, just lifting and lowering his wings—for the show of it.

But this was to be an American horse, and that was perfect. Although it did seem too bad that the choice had been a mare. Martin knew his mother would prefer a spirited stallion, but his father would put his foot down on that, of course.

"Edwina, I wish you would see to the rows of box in front of the house."

What in the world did that mean? Both Martin and his mother stared at the uncommon nature of this remark, a matter to do with gardening. But Martin's father was rising.

"Come to the window and I will show you what I mean."

Then Martin's heart leapt. He understood. It was the moment. His mother rose and sighed, and he followed her through the salon, beating his ribs with his elbows—a way of his when he was overwrought. He saw his father pushing ajar one of the tall windows on the vine-clad balcony, and he watched his mother step with a kind of indifference to the marble sill. His father pointed to the street and his

mother gathered her sheer lilac-colored skirt and leaned across the ivy. Martin crowded behind her and a flash of hot July sunlight split on a silver-traced shaft in the street below, blinding him for a second. Then he heard the exclamation:

"Why, whose lovely horse?" And he saw framed, through the green trailings of the balcony, the beautiful brown satin horse, in trim harness, hitched to a smart runabout. The shining turnout was in charge of a young man standing beneath the chestnut trees at the kerb.

The door had opened below, and Amelie and Luce could be heard expressing admiration in rapid sentences.

"Whose is it?" Martin's mother was asking again, and his father was drawing his moustache to a long point.

"I wonder," he said, smiling his cool smile.

At that his wife turned and embraced him. Everyone was satisfied at her complete surprise. Amelie was grimacing up from the walk excitedly. Martin saw his mother turn hurriedly and flutter across the room. Next, he heard her heels tapping the steps and her strong voice floated up as he followed.

"Oh, Cassie, I have a horse! Come and see my horse!"

As she stepped into the sunlight Martin saw her set her beautiful white teeth over her lip and draw her breath with a little gleeful sound. Whenever she did that he was sure she was happy, and it made him press his tongue against the roof of his mouth, hard, because something seemed to be pulling at the inside of his throat.

Cassie came heavily through the wide door as Martin's mother stepped before the mare and patted a white star between the animal's great eyes. The horse dipped its head nervously at this, and Cassie called out in her pallid treble:

"You be careful, Miss Edwina! Just look out, now!"

But the mare had been quickly reassured by the warmth of the hands against her nose.

"How beautiful! And what's my horse's name?"

The question in English brought the young man standing near the animal alive. In rich cockney he replied:

"'Er nime's Bravo, ma'am."

"A mare!"

The stable boy grinned, nodding. Martin glanced uneasily as his father appeared in the doorway in time to catch his wife's exclamation. She turned to him, smiling.

"Why didn't you tell me you were going to do this?"

"We thought you would like the surprise."

"Of course, I do. Where did you get her?"

"Don't you like the horse?"

"Why, of course, Eugène."

"Then does it matter where it came from?"

Martin began to fear. Would they be careful? Was one of those sudden icy looks coming into his father's face at the next word? The servants took themselves into the house, but Martin knew that the silence behind the grilled windows of the kitchen meant that they were listening, expecting, too, the possible thing he dreaded, an unreasonable flare of his father's unaccountable displeasure.

"No, it doesn't matter, dear." There was a deeply pacifying tone in his mother's voice. "I was just thinking that if you had to look far to find this mare, that was too bad. Not that she isn't worth it. But you know Duval has that beautiful black stallion for sale,—*Incendie*; you remember him?"

Martin watched his father's fingers drawing an end to his moustache with great precision.

"Well, we'll get rid of this nag today. Boy!" He turned to the groom. "Take this horse back to the English stables. Tell your employer he may dispose of it. Madame is not pleased with it."

Martin began to strip the bark from a young chestnut nearby. What he had feared was happening. He listened, dismayed, to his mother's exasperated remonstrance.

"Oh, Eugène, don't be so unreasonable. I only meant—"

"It seems I can do nothing correctly. You desire a stallion to run away and kill yourself. Yes, that's it. You wish to get away, to be rid of me, one way or another."

The mad look was in his face, graying it, deepening the green of his eyes. Martin wanted to run, but he wished, too, to help his mother if it could be done.

"Mother doesn't mean that—"

But a glare silenced him. "You know all about her, to be sure! Everyone knows what she thinks and means, everyone but me. Only I am kept in the dark, made a fool of!"

It was useless to attempt a defense now. It was too late to stem the rage of this irrational man. Martin flung a look toward the groom dawdling by the horse, unperturbed at this exhibition of tempers in a swift flow of language he could not understand. But as the talk veered to English, Martin caught an amused glint in the youth's eyes.

"You're so unreasonable, Eugène!" Desperate and forlorn that sounded.

"Yes, I'm a fool! I'm mad!"

The cockney was guardedly amused. Martin shifted his eyes and caught his mother's brow going black.

"Well, you are," she exclaimed clearly. "Utterly mad!"

Martin seized a fold of her dress. "Don't say anything more, Mother, please."

His father turned and strode to the door. When he was in a rage his entire body seemed charged with a rigid current. He walked with unnatural jerking steps. The double doors were suddenly flung shut, closing away his tall, infuriated figure, shutting Martin and his mother out on the street. There was a faint muffled snort of laughter from behind the grill of a kitchen window. It was funny, in a way, but it was also tragic; and Martin could not respond to his mother's wan smile as she glanced at him, shrugging her shoulders.

The mare had swung her head at the bang of the doors and made a soft blowing sound. Now the warm strong hands were fondling her muzzle once more.

"Bravo, it's not your fault," a voice murmured in her ear. "No, it's not your fault."

The groom opened a friendly passage. "She's an h'American 'oss, ma'am, comes from the Stites, like yerself, I tike it. She's hexcellent stuff, ma'am, if a bit strong. Not so splintery and delicate as these 'ere French nags, to be sure. Myself, I fivor 'osses solid—even she 'osses, ma'am."

"Give us a lump of sugar, Cassie."

A dark hand extended through the window-grill, and Martin took the sugar, handing it to his mother. She laid a cube on the flat of her palm, and the horse twisted gray lips, biting down with huge teeth. Martin thought his mother recklessly brave. He moved slowly away, but once alone, he ran all the way to the room at the top of the house. On the floor there, he had begun to erect a miniature railway. He sat down now and moved a stick blindly. A whole trestle fell with a metallic rattle. It didn't matter, he felt. It would never really work, anyway. . . .

Martin's devotion amounted to a fault. So strong an emotion in an over-attentive child could hardly have escaped being an oppression. It had an odd effect on his mother's nature. The Langdons, her family, were impulsively demonstrative people. Martin could remember the tenderness of Darling, his mother's mother, and the warm open manners of her household. Even the way his aunts and his mother had quarreled, he could recall dimly, had something warmhearted about it. They declared themselves, openly, those people, in love or anger. Yet in her relations with him, his mother held off, rather. Something in him alienated her a little, his sheer importunance, perhaps, expressing itself incongruously in this aloof house. His father was reserved to such a degree in that characteristic uncertain French way. In her attention to Martin, his mother showed a slight withdrawal that seemed at times tinged with mistrust. Still, his sympathy made merciless demands of her. He was watchful and jealous of her time, loath to have her away. And now there had arisen this new cause of separation,—his mother's new delight in Bravo.

When she went for her drives and it happened that Martin must remain at home, he watched from the door or from a window, and seeing her start away with anyone who had come to deprive him of her company, he grew sultry with resentment. As his mother settled her broad shoulders, lifting the reins, desolation spread through his veins. He awaited the light flick of the whip and heard with a sicken-

ing heart the scrape of the wheels as Bravo turned the run-about from the kerb. Martin cried out, no matter who might be there.

"Mother!"

And Bravo suffered a keener touch of the whip, bearing innocently the angry response to that insistent appeal from door or window.

"Mother, wave to me!"

The demand followed each time his mother left the house without him. He was convinced that it was contemptible of him to behave in such a way, yet he did it unfailingly. He was helpless against his overwhelming devotion. On such occasions even Cassie had been known to shame him. "Oh, let your mother go," she would say with a rare rude cadence in her voice. "You know how little pleasure she finds." Usually the accusation was effective. Martin's shrill calls ceased their echo against the austere gray houses.

One morning he came upon his mother undoing a box from the florist's shop. He knew that this could hold only orchids. They were the one flower his mother really loved. He loved them, too, and took a sensuous delight in the opening of a box, seeing the tissue turned carefully back by his mother's strong hands, and the purple mass uncovered, cool and fragile. As a rule, when this happened in his presence the box was lifted and held so that he might dip his face against the damp flowers; but, unexpectedly, as he entered the room this morning his mother folded back the coverings and started away.

"Can't I see the orchids?" Martin asked.

"I'm not opening them yet."

"But you were." At once he was heavy with suspicion, of what he had no idea, or even that it was suspicion. But something prodded. They had been standing in the dining-room, and now Martin was alone there. His mother had gone out quickly, unnecessarily closing the black and gilt doors behind her. He hurriedly drew them open, thrusting his body through.

"Who sent them?" he demanded, knowing well he was beyond his rights. His mother frowned down at him, half way up the stairs.

"Do you need to know everything?"

"Who sent you the orchids?" he persisted with an impudence that frightened him. He was terrified of her anger. It could be cruel.

"Close those doors," she ordered.

"Please tell me," he entreated.

"Let go of those doors. Go away."

He wavered as he saw her descending the steps, but he challenged her:

"It's funny you won't tell me who sent you those orchids."

His daring amazed him. He knew he had gone too far, yet there had been an increasing sense of mystery in his mind about his mother's feeling for orchids recently—since that day she had stood in the door of the salon and had appeared to be hiding that bouquet beneath her feather boa. He could not resist probing now. He was to pay for it. His mother's eyes were flashing as she reached him, and she caught her lip with her teeth. He felt a swift stinging blow on the cheek. He retreated behind the black doors and burst into tears.

"Go away from there!"

He heard her stamping furiously up the stairs.

That afternoon Martin stood at a window on the third floor and watched his mother drive away. As she crossed the walk below, he hung perilously over a stone fleur-de-lys on the balustrade. He saw the orchids pinned at her waist. This time, he was determined, he would hold his tongue. They were estranged. He would humiliate himself no more. But when he saw his mother offering Bravo the accustomed lump of sugar, and when she patted the star on the mare's head, Martin's resolution dissolved. He quavered, distraught:

"I'm sorry! Mother, I'm sorry!" But she mounted the trap without a look in his direction.

"Mother, wave to me. . . . Please wave, Mother. . . ."

He heard the signals, and Bravo lifted her hooves smartly in the sunlight. He could hear his mother murmuring tenderly to the horse, and he was positive she was doing it only to spite him. "Good Bravo. Yes, pretty Bravo." Her voice came up through the chestnuts.

Martin was sure she hated him. He was to blame; never-

theless, he was deeply sorry for himself. He caught the stone fleur-de-lys and swung out to see Bravo glitter and disappear round the corner of the Avenue d'Iena. Where were they going? Oh, where? Maybe he'd fall out the window and be lying right there below, between the rows of box, when his mother came home from driving—wearing her orchids.

The glass roof of the atelier was becoming just a dim blue sheet; the sun was gone. It was late when Martin heard his father's voice in the vestibule, and he listened apprehensively to the brief negative responses of Luce. Madame had not come in. No, she had not said where she was going that afternoon. As he listened to those voices in the shadowy hall, his jaw sagged and his eyes were very still. There was a reason today for remaining in the big empty room on the ground floor, long after the light had faded from the faces of Madame La Feuille and her husband on the wall. The fact that it was already dark—and that his mother had not yet come home, that was the reason, an excellent one, understood by all the household. Though Monsieur La Feuille might precede his wife by only a few minutes, the fact that she was not at home toward the end of the afternoon when he returned was a warning to the servants. They withdrew and closed the kitchen door. They understood that Monsieur's temper might unleash itself. They did not relish the sounds of his voice falling coldly down the well of the stairway and echoing on the dark stones below. "What are you doing on the streets at night? Ladies do not parade after dark!" Such savage things he said in his rages. Erect on the sofa in the atelier, Martin heard the kitchen door drawn, and he heard his father's footsteps on the parquetry, back and forth, beginning their sentinel march. None who listened to that ominous sound was so alarmed as he. He stared through the leaded doors, though he could see nothing in the darkness of the hall. He was straining his attention for a sound of Bravo's hooves on the street outside. Bells jingled faintly and vehicles passed, yet none slowed down with an exchange of phrases between that

strong voice and the cockney of the groom who waited patiently at the kerb. The blue ceiling grew gradually deeper. Then there was a startling crash of something striking the floor. That could be only the marble Mercury. His father must have struck at it, knocking the statue over. Martin rose and crossed the room. He shrank beneath the frames on the wall. Why didn't she come home!

When at last the footsteps in the hall came to a pause, Martin held his breath. Yes, there were the sounds. The hooves slowing in the street, the familiar phrases muffled by the heavy doors, his mother's greeting and the groom's cheery response. Then the thin sound of the bell echoed through the silent house. She must know, Martin thought, what lay ahead of her in the dark hall as she stood there pulling the knob of the bell. They waited, his mother and he, on either side of that stillness. The door creaked slowly.

"I'm sorry, Eugène . . ." Her voice rose apologetically as Martin crept toward the hall. The door slammed. The pictures in the atelier vibrated against the walls. A swift ascent of feet on the stairway was audible. Martin opened the doors cautiously and stepped into the hall, listening. After a moment another door banged high in the house; he could hear even the snarl of a key turned in the bedroom door on the third floor. There was no sound anywhere then, and he started slowly up the stairs. It was quite dark now. He could scarcely see.

"Mother?" he called. There was no answer. Something he could not have explained caused him to stop suddenly and turn, plunging through the gloom down the stairs. He ran to the entry and stood listening. Was someone crying somewhere in the dark? At that moment he caught the sound of her heels on the stone walk beyond the street doors. He jerked a door open just as she turned away.

"Mother!" he cried out. "Where are you going?"

She stared at him in the shadowy light.

"What is it, Mother? What's the matter?"

She stepped calmly away from him. "He slammed the door in my face," she said quietly.

Martin reached for her hand, but she was moving away.

"Mother, come here," he pleaded. "Where are you going?"

"Not into his house," she said. "I have some pride."

He leapt after her in an agony of fear. "You can't go away!" he called.

"Go back into the house," she ordered sternly. "Stop crying."

And Martin stood frozen, seeing her turn away, the light from a street-lamp falling on her as she passed under the chestnut trees. When she stepped into that pool of pale yellow light a pin at her belt flashed brilliantly. and Martin caught a dim purple blur at her waist. *The orchids.* . . .

It was quite natural that at such a time as this Madame Ogden and her sister, Madame Greville, should come to their brother's house. The servants appreciated that. But they were not too pleased to have this house brought abruptly under the direction of two women who knew how servants should be treated and saw to it that they got no better than they deserved. Often Luce and Amelie had laughed at the mad liberty they took for themselves when the kitchen was ignored, while the house had slid along in the extravagant indifferent American way. They had grown so accustomed to doing as they pleased and thriving on their clever underhandedness that they met this new régime with resentment—expressed, to be sure, only in the kitchen when they were alone there. The two sisters of Monsieur La Feuille kept shrewd vigilance. Only Cassie remained imperturbably herself under the inspection of these visiting executors. Cassie kept her garden, facing the disapproval her idleness earned with bland incomprehension. Madame Ogden could speak English well enough. But she was at a disadvantage. She knew what American servants expected. It was she whom Monsieur La Feuille had been visiting in America when he had "courted Miss Edwina." Now, being rid of her American husband, a widow back in Paris with his money to live on, Madame Ogden reverted to intelligent French standards; and it galled her that she was forced to allow Cassie her

established privileges. Cassie discussed it with Martin over the geranium bed.

"It's funny how fond they've grown of your father all of a sudden. It's funny they have to come over here every day and boss us around—now that Miss Edwina's away. You can see without a magnifying glass what they're playing for. Even if they are such good Catholics. Catholics say it's a terrible sin to get divorces—"

Martin shut her off at that. "Oh, don't, Cassie!" He dropped a trowel he had been wielding and ran quickly into the house. At the top of the stairs he paused. His aunts were in the salon. Madame Ogden was translating aloud from an English newspaper for her sister's benefit. Martin marked the English phrases as she droned them out. He realized that these must be things written in the American papers that came to their house. He listened with horror to the names of his mother and father coupled with a constantly recurring word: *alleged*. Plainly that meant that these shortcomings and peculiarities of his father were being told openly for everyone to hear. Martin could scarcely believe that his mother had been driven to this. He was puzzled, too, by the tone of his aunt's voice as she recited the exposures; it seemed to mingle a certain pleasure with an outraged inflection. Catching sight of the boy in the doorway, Madame Ogden folded away the paper. She and her sister became at once very grave.

That afternoon Martin was to go for a drive with his mother. She and her friend, Mrs. Meyers, were to call for him. Mrs. Meyers was, according to Martin's aunts, "One of those Americans that live all over Europe." But perhaps the blackest thing against her was the fact that she had been sheltering their brother's wife since the night he and his son had been "deserted." Martin was grateful to Mrs. Meyers in his heart.

Apparently now his aunts suspected that he as well was to be coerced into forsaking his father, in some fantastic way betraying him. As much as he longed to see his exiled mother, he dreaded being drawn into a bewildering strategic position. In his mind a formless anxiety gathered before

such a confusion. Would he be made to declare himself for or against one of his parents? He was abject, and though he could not imagine what had produced the crisis, his heart was with his mother. He could not bear the thought of her remaining away. It seemed so wrong, so unfortunate for her, to leave her home and her family. Martin felt that she would belong to others, strangers, that she was abandoning her family against any wish to do so.

"Are your socks darned?" Madame Ogden questioned him. Madame Greville smoothed his hair with great concern.

"You have what in America is called a cowlick," Madame Ogden observed. And Martin stood unpleasantly conscious of their unfamiliar hands. He never thought of them as relatives, he never called them *Tante*.

"Remember your promises to your father." They instructed him generally. "He clothes and feeds you. It is to him you owe the greater duty."

Martin responded dully. He hated their renewed intimacy with his father. He thought that even his father was skeptical of it. It was all in conspiracy against their sister-in-law.

Drawing a curtain, one of the women leaned toward a window. "She's there now. She's stopping across the street. The Meyers is coming to get him. Such effrontery! As if she had not meddled sufficiently!"

Not waiting for the bell to ring, Martin ran down to the door. Mrs. Meyers, a rather stout, fashionably dressed woman, took him by the hand and led him across the street where his mother sat on the high trap behind Bravo with the whip and reins lax in her hands. Mrs. Meyers helped him to climb up, and his mother smiled somberly and kissed him. Martin knew that his aunts were watching from behind the curtains. He was eager to be away from that house.

They drove through the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne and past the gates into the forest. In an unfrequented spot they stopped and Bravo was allowed to nibble the grass at the roadside. Martin was sitting between Mrs. Meyers and his

mother, and they turned now and began to question him. With difficulty he told of his aunts, how they had taken over the house, and how they oppressed him with their care. His mother looked very angry.

"That's plain to understand," she remarked. And Mrs. Meyers called them a pair of French cats.

Then Martin's mother asked if he didn't wish to go and live with her. Perhaps they would go to a far city, maybe back to America, she explained. Martin shook his head reluctantly and was mute. His mother had counted on his great love. She was astounded at his refusal. It was a deep relief to Martin to know definitely that she really wanted him, and he played his rôle desolately, this part which he could not understand, but which, he appreciated in a vague way, was a dramatic one.

"Don't you love me any more, dear?" His mother took his chin in her cool fingers as he bent his face away from her. He nodded but could say nothing.

"Then you'll come with me."

"I can't." He saw Mrs. Meyers glance meaningly at his mother.

"But why won't you come with me?"

"I want you to come home," he answered. "My duty is to my father." He ran off the formula that had been given him, a heavy sickness in his heart. "I can't leave my father."

"Your father . . ." his mother echoed him in bewilderment, and her hand deserted his cheek. There was a long silence. Far off, Martin heard the music of a carousel. How could people be happy?

"They've poisoned your child's mind, Edwina," Mrs. Meyers was speaking as if Martin were deaf.

"No, no!" he cried. But he could find nothing else to say. And his mother drew Bravo's head up from the grass and drove slowly toward the gates. She did not speak at all until she had set Martin down at the corner of the Rue Galilee. Then she looked at him from her high seat and bent her head.

"Goodby . . . Don't forget me," she said. And Martin

fled, choking with tears, along the walk, and flung himself against the doors of his father's house. He heard the wheels scraping as Bravo turned at the corner, and he sobbed aloud.

The door opened, and in the gloomy hall Martin saw one of his aunts hurrying down the stairs.

"What have they done to you?" It was Madame Ogden. She rushed at him. "What did they say, those two?"

He raised his head and saw Cassie opening the kitchen door. He ran to her and fell on his knees, catching her wide gingham apron.

"Yes, Sonny," her thin voice soothed him. She drew him into the kitchen and shut the door. "You come with old Cassie, and don't you cry. Cassie'll make some of those star cookies. Remember? The star cookies. There's nobody here but us."

Weeks passed, and Martin began to feel very strange in his loneliness. His aunts had left off coming to the house, and everyone was glad of that. Martin felt that Monsieur Crevé had had something to do with this relieving change. He wasn't sure. But there had been a morning when something had gone wrong during the visit between Monsieur Crevé and Martin's father. Madame Greville had knocked on the doors of the salon and had been ordered away none too civilly by her brother. She had gone in in spite of that, and then there had been some swift words and she had come out and called shrilly up to Madame Ogden. They would go away and never set foot in their brother's house again. Martin was having his breakfast when he heard that delightful announcement on the stairway. Monsieur Crevé had come in shortly after and had rubbed Martin's head and had said something about how jolly it was being old bachelors together. "It may not last," he croaked pleasantly. "And don't you get too lonely while it does."

But Martin was so lonely that he felt almost ill. He wandered in the Champs Elysées, down beyond the *Rond Point* where they had the little *guignols* under the trees. He watched other children laughing at the foolish little shows and he envied them their carelessness. There was a veil

between him and the world. He felt old and lost, wandering along these walks where goat-carts jingled and fountains played, where people sat in pebbled gardens and ate happily with their children. Cassie told him he ought not go away like that in the dangerous French streets. "Anything happens on these streets," she warned him. But he went. He didn't care what happened.

One night early in the autumn he stayed later than he should have stayed, and he was met by Cassie at the corner of the charbonnier's, coming to search for him. She scolded him, but he sensed something unusual behind her annoyance.

"You better be getting home. There's a reason," she said mysteriously. "You run up and wash yourself and wear that sailor suit for dinner." She pushed him before her.

He waited long for dinner to be announced that evening. He sat alone in the salon, expecting his father, and perhaps Monsieur Crevé. But why were they so late? He would like to get to bed where he could forget everything. He heard voices suddenly in the hall below. Luce was crowing in excitement.

"Bon soir, Madame. Soyez la bienvenue."

Then that response. He leapt from his chair and stood tingling in the doorway. Yes, there was no mistake. She was home. That was her voice ringing up the stairway. He rushed to the stairs and would have fallen had not Monsieur Crevé reached him in time.

"Easy!" called Monsieur Crevé. "We are mending things, not breaking them, tonight."

But Martin broke away and seized his mother's hand. Then, suddenly, he was very shy, and so was she.

After dinner that evening, they sat before a fire in the salon. Martin noticed that his father and Monsieur Crevé talked to his mother as if she were a stranger whom they wished to change into a friend. Once, during a long silence, Martin rose and started the new phonograph to entertain them. His father had been uncommonly attentive during the long lonely weeks of the summer, had brought presents and done his best to be friendly. The most spectacular

gift had been this new talking machine with a horn like a great blue morning-glory. One record pleased his mother greatly, so Martin played it over, assuring her that it was sung by the greatest singer in the world, calling attention to the astonishing high note at the end. She sat listening and watching with a kind of formal politeness. When Monsieur Crevé rose to go, and Martin's father suggested it was his bedtime, Martin imagined he caught an expression of relief in his mother's eyes. Alone, in his room, he reflected on it all. He was troubled by that cool, absent-minded behavior. He said a prayer into his pillow that before long his mother might be changed to her old self. They would need to work in some way to help her forget the strange outside world.

The early autumn weeks went smoothly by; the only torment for Martin in their days was his initiation into the school his French cousins attended. Up to this time he had gone to simple English classes where most of the pupils had been Americans. But now, his father decided, it was time to acknowledge his blood, to become what he should be, a French student. Martin hated it so strongly that there were times when he forgot his habitual anxiety about everything else in the world. There were days when his mother drove him in the trim runabout and set him down at the door of the school just off the Parc Monceau. There were days when this was almost a means of force to insure his attendance. He made every possible excuse to stay away. And as she set him down before the gates and turned Bravo about, Martin found it easy to say that he hated the horse setting off past the little ruined temple in the park. But he didn't really. He saw that Bravo was the one true pleasure in his mother's life. They were closer friends than ever, now, since she lived in that odd spell that persisted in spite of the new consideration shown her by everyone, especially by her husband. Martin brooded over the core of iciness in his mother's manner. Nothing banished that little formal look in her face. She was like Sleeping Beauty, he thought. And at times he was afraid that his father's patience had begun to wear at his resolves.

One night, with no warning, Martin had his first lesson in the permanence of things; he was taught how they do not change.

What had made him jump in his sleep, causing him to sit up in the dark and listen to the house? In the next room he heard a stir. He remembered that his two cousins, François and Jacques, were spending the night, that they had come home with him from school because his father had supposed it might give Martin pleasure to have their company. What a mistaken idea that was! Now Martin heard them murmuring together and saw a crack of light flash under their door.

"What the devil?" François muttered.

The stillness hung in the dark a moment and ended with a sharp crash. Could it be burglars? Martin's spine tingled. François had come through the room and was listening at the head of the stairs. Martin slid from bed and ran in to his younger cousin. He found him crouched against his pillows.

"What is it, Jacques?" he asked in a terrified whisper.

There was another shattering crash from below, and an unrecognizable voice was raised in shrill cursing. A tumbling falling sound followed and Martin heard his mother scream. Before he knew what he was about, he was flying down the stairs, through the dark house, in his nightgown. What would he find? Was she being murdered?

He flung himself into the boudoir adjoining his mother's bedroom. The blaze from a chandelier through her open door blinded him and he had only a sense of terrible destruction all about. Chairs were upset, clothing was strewn, pictures were crooked on the walls. He stood paralyzed in the dark outer room. Through the chaos, he saw his mother, kneeling in her bed, her hair hanging about her shoulders. In his pyjamas, glaring in a white frenzy about the room, stood his father; one hand was poised, lifted in mid air above his head, and Martin saw a small round object flashing a golden light in his father's fingers; the arm swung and the golden object spun heavily down against a handmirror lying on a table. Glass flew in a splintery shower. The silver

frame of the mirror was seized and flung like a bolt across the room. It struck the tall pier-glass near the door, and a shivering crashing storm of blinding light fell about the room. Martin dashed toward the horrid confusion. It was a nightmare, he was sure. If he could reach his mother, turned to stone there in her bed, she would wake him up. As he leapt forward he stumbled against something. What was the thing in his way? Four great claws stuck up from the floor and in each one was a hard shining ball. Not until his father lunged and shattered one of these balls did Martin recognize a familiar table overturned in the center of the room. He shrieked and dove from the rain of glass and sprang into his mother's arms.

François was in the door. Boldly he cried out: "Are you crazy?" And Martin's father shouted back: "Yes, I am! Stark crazy!" And he stumbled through the boudoir and out to the stairs. A moment later it sounded as if he had lost his footing and fallen on the stairway.

Martin was clutched tightly against his mother. Through her night-dress he could see her heart pounding. He pressed away from her and looked into her face. Her eyes were stone-black, blind. She was white at the lips.

"What is it?" François approached her.

She sank down as if she were dazed. She pointed to a small golden circle lying in a heap of broken glass on the floor.

"Give that to me," she said.

François stooped and handed her a twisted shell of thin gold hung on a knotted golden chain.

"What is it, Mother? What is that?" Martin touched her hand as she slid the ruined locket under the yoke of her gown and held it there against her breast.

"Nothing. It's nothing." She moistened her lips.

François stared insolently. "Is that what drove him out of his head?" He put the question coolly.

"Leave my room."

Martin clung to her hand. It was icy cold.

"Go back to sleep," she said. "Go back to your bed."

As his mother urged him from her, Martin watched her

heart giving great leaps under her thin white gown. More than anything he had ever seen in his life, that frightened him—the visible leaping of that heart.

It was gray and cold the next morning. Martin dressed, shivering. He wondered if anybody would remember after that terrible occurrence last night that today was his birthday.

When he reached the breakfast table his mother was already there, sitting quietly by herself. Her hand lay near an open envelope and Martin could tell from a distance that it was addressed in his father's peculiar writing. He wondered what it had held but he dared not ask. He was grateful that his mother was still in the house. He climbed into his seat, and she rose, coming round to kiss him.

"Happy Birthday," she said. "Your cousins have gone."

At that instant Martin saw a bank note folded on his napkin.

"Your father left that for you," his mother said, stroking his forehead absently.

Martin was fearful and curious, but he only asked: "Has he gone away?"

His mother moved into the salon and wandered to a window.

"He's gone to the Black Forest, on a hunting trip," she called back in a strange voice. "Hurry and finish your breakfast. We'll take a drive in this bracing air. I have a queer tight feeling in my head. I've ordered Bravo. I suppose I was too early for them at the stables."

A few minutes later Martin heard her moving about upstairs with quick heavy steps. He couldn't eat. He didn't understand this behavior. He went for his hat and coat and waited in the atelier for Bravo to arrive.

They drove along the Seine for a short distance. It was very cold and dreary, Martin thought. The trees were bare and long strips of fog lay on the river. Bravo ran briskly, and soon she was steaming, her shining brown flanks were streaked with foam. His mother was driving her a little cruelly, it seemed to Martin; she was striking oftener than

she needed with the whip-end. By the Trocadero they turned into the Rue de Passy, and at last reached the Bois. Martin imagined that Bravo must be wondering, as he was, what this meant, this swift race through the streets and into the cold empty park before the world was at its business. His mother was silent. She was not murmuring the usual loving things to her horse. Martin glanced up at her now and then but she did not speak. She held the reins tightly and made Bravo run. Martin wondered what she could be thinking of. That awful scene. . . . But he tried to put it from his own thoughts by counting the swans huddled at the edge of a misty lake.

They had wound through the gray drives and were heading for the gates, passing the concessions of the *Jardin d'Acclimatation*. Suddenly, at one of the curves in the road, they came upon a gaudy, gilt-encrusted wagon. Two great horses were drawing it along, and from a cluster of pipes in the center of the roof, floated a plume of steam. Martin noticed a picture on the wagon. It showed a woman dressed in white satin putting a lion through a flaming hoop.

"There must be a circus coming, Mother," he remarked.

At that second the pipes commenced to emit loud curdled noises, a blurred roar of sound. Bravo gave an abrupt leap sidewise.

"Whoa, Bravo!" The whip came down on the mare's haunch and she squatted in the shafts and reared again. The reins were pulled taut, and Martin heard his mother utter a sharp command. The steam shot higher from the wagon, and a tune, spiraling and shrieking, began to pour from the pipes. Bravo careered and bolted.

"She's got the bit. That calliope . . ."

The horse made for the gates of the fortifications not far off; her feet sounded like shots to Martin. The light runabout wobbled on its springs. He clutched the arm-rest.

"Run, damn you!" he heard his mother say between her teeth.

"Don't swear, Mother," he called, but the wind blew the words into his throat. The whip sliced the air and Bravo's haunch sank and quivered. She shot out wildly.

"Stop her, Mother!" Martin gasped. But his mother was smiling a strange smile.

"Run, damn you!" she repeated, and Martin sank terrified against the seat. The trees flashed by with little whiffs of sound. Bravo lurched and Martin's hat was shaken from his head.

"Mother," he cried. "My hat!" But she didn't hear him. They dashed through the gates, and she let the reins sag and sat bolt upright, smiling, as they rocked insanely down the Avenue. Not far ahead was a crossing. Martin braced his feet on the dashboard. Bravo was foaming all over now.

"She's running away!" he cried. "Can't you stop her?"

The answer came back in a joyous high voice. "Let her run! Run, Bravo! Run your legs off!"

A wheel struck a box fallen in the roadway and the runabout rose and swayed, sagging heavily on Martin's side. His mother was thrown against him, all but knocking him from the seat. The splintered wood flew in the air around them. Shouts were thrown after them from the edges of the Avenue.

"Stop it! Oh, stop it!" Martin called in utter panic. But he saw that she didn't care. He was alone.

"I'm going to jump!" he cried, and gathered himself against the back of the seat. At that, his mother turned and looked down at him as if she saw him for the first time, sitting beside her. Martin stared back, convinced that she was as much a stranger to him as anyone on earth. Her eyes looked sick, suddenly, and her mouth twisted as though she had been hurt inside, dreadfully hurt some way. She stared at her son. Then:

"Whoa, Bravo!" she shouted. "Whoa, you damned beast! Whoa, damn you!"

Martin saw her teeth cover her lips and press, and a thin trickle of blood went down her chin. He closed his eyes, sick. The runabout trembled and swayed, but he kept his eyes closed, waiting for the smash. He heard his mother's voice, loud but evenly now, tightened with anger:

"Trot, Bravo! Trot, I say!"

The rig was slowing down. Bravo's hooves were less like cannon-shots. The level angry voice repeated:

"Trot. Yes, you'll trot. By God, you'll trot when I tell you to . . ." The whip whistled down. "By God, you will!"

When they reached home, Martin saw his mother drop the reins and jump quickly to the ground. Without a word, without even turning to look at her horse, she walked into the house.

The groom was amazed at the condition of Bravo's skin. She was blanketed with foam and her mouth was badly torn; her lips were all a ruby froth.

"What's the matter with 'er, son?" The youth stared at Bravo and at the retreating figure of Martin's mother.

"She wanted to run away. . . ." Martin tried to explain it. He was still trembling in the knees and in his stomach.

"I always did sye there was too much stuff in this 'ere mare for a woman to 'andle. She looks quiet enough, but there's too much warm stuff under that smooth skin of 'ers." The groom climbed cautiously into the driver's seat.

It was only a few days after that that Bravo was put to pasture. Monsieur Crevé had advised it. He had been talking very quietly to Martin's mother. Martin gathered that it was Monsieur Crevé's recommendation that Bravo be out of sight, away, where she could do harm to no one, when his father returned . . . "From the Black Forest, yes that's right," added Monsieur Crevé sadly. "The Black Forest is where your father has been."

Martin was greatly surprised that his mother made no objection to the plan. She rose slowly from a chair by the fireplace and went from the room without a word.

After a little while, Martin pushed the doors of his mother's room partly ajar. He saw her sitting at her window, gazing out blankly at the chimney-pots that rolled in a wide sea. Guardedly he closed the doors and went to his own room. From a small bank that Monsieur Crevé had given him once,—a small iron pig,—he shook out the folded note that had been left by his father as a birthday gift. He hur-

ried down the stairs and ran to a shop he knew not far from the Etoile. Soon he was back at his mother's door; and this time he opened it and stepped in confidently. With great satisfaction he handed her a large box. She opened it and smiled.

"But where did you get them?" She looked at him with mystified eyes over the orchids.

"You remember the banknote for my birthday?" Martin reminded her, and she bent and kissed him.

Later, Martin was talking with Monsieur Crevé in the salon.

"You don't think she'll go away any more, do you?" he asked in a low voice. Monsieur Crevé replied:

"She promised she would stay with us."

"I'm glad of that," Martin said.

Monsieur Crevé deliberated, and answered thoughtfully. "Yes, perhaps that is enough to be glad of. In this world we must be glad of as much as we can. If you remember that, you will be glad, as you say in English—a good many days."

Martin heard the door closing quietly below. He moved to a window and looked down. It had just begun to snow, large wet flakes were in the air. He saw his mother moving slowly out beneath the naked trees. To her long gray coat she had pinned the orchids he had bought. He started to knock on the pane to make her look, but then he decided not to. He didn't wish to remind her of Bravo. . . . She looked strong and beautiful to Martin as she walked down there in the snow. And she looked lonely, too, and sad. Just as she passed from under the bare chestnuts she turned and glanced straight up at the window and waved,—as if she knew he had been watching her, as if she had meant to do that all along. He bent his fingers back at her, and pressed his face against the cold glass, hard, hard. He wondered where she would go. He wished she had a friend that she could go to see.

DAVID O'NEIL

TWELVE POEMS

VENICE

The loyal moon
still writes rippling rhymes
on the lagoons
to the mouldering
Queen of the Adriatic—
Unmindful of her mésalliance
with Thomas Cook and Sons.

THE NAVAL OF FRANCE

Peasants thrive on the hogwash
of happiness.
They grumble drowsily
like wind in the wheat;
their brains bleached
by a bloodless print.
Their souls are plumply pleased
with a hors d'oeuvre,
a pair of pleasing eyes,
and a tender haste
at bed-time.

A LA MODE

Over a rickety back-yard fence
a perky little pear tree
with manicured blossoms
lifts its powder-puff nose
in the air.

THREE POPLARS AT MY WINDOW

Master foilsman
parry
with cavalier nonchalance
the storm:
not an inch of ground
to give . . .
jealously guarding
their bit of earth
and the sky
that goes with it.

CHINESE EDUCATION

Baby faces mirthless as shovels
endlessly chanting
lip-worn odes and codes—
When their voices flag
a mole whiskered scholar
misses a puff
at his water pipe,
slaps his desk with a stick—
and up they chirrup again.

CENTURY-MINDED

They've had their ration of good luck—
Now there's the beauty of completeness
in the faces of the old wise men
talking in the sun.
Interior smiles hover
like butterflies
about their eyes and lips
as they meditate on the old proverb:
"The more one digs
the more there isn't any water."

ALONG "EL CAMINO REAL"

Mountains:
 seared by cycles of sunlight.
 Up their arroyas
 live oaks climb—
 a tortured wilderness
 of bent-backed Pilgrims,
 murmuring:
 "Through my fault.
 Through my fault
 Through my
 most grievous fault."

BROTHERLY LOVE

In the Simian world
 there's little fuss
 about fidelity
 but there's plenty
 of brotherly love.
 Their neighbors itching enigmas
 they find quite
 as toothsome
 as their own.

"SAVE FACE"

The market place:
 An offended great-grandfather
 Airing his grievances
 To scandal-mongers.
 To save its collective face
 His humiliated family
 Will send a peace-talker to placate him . . .
 He will return reluctantly to the rice-bowl,—
 A bundle of injured innocence.

PIN PRICK

It may not mean a lot to you . . .
but a pin-prick
means a lot
to a toy balloon
that has a passion
for flying.

CHOW-TIME

Young men on the quay,
—Squatting kangaroos—
Playing Chinese chess with bits of brick
and stone . . .
A litter and jumble of sampans;
Old men on the bows
Mumbling between puff-pipes.
Wives at the cauldrons astern . . .
Peaceful packs of firecrackers.

STONE FAG

Stone-bruising farms—
New England
trumpet flowers
celebrating
from the roof-trees
gardens gone to seed.
“After all, farmin’ ain’t so bad
you git used to late and early,
and when the bleak days come—
after carin’ for the stock
you can rest your face and hands.
It’s slower somehow for the women folks . . .
I s’pose if they’d a mind for things
that have a trick of multiplyin’
they’d trouble more about mile-stones
than grave-stones.”

MANUEL KOMROFF

THE LETTER AND THE JANITOR'S BOY

Charles Darling:

I love you only and I belong only to you. Everything that happened last night will, I hope, be all for the best. I cannot understand how I acted as I did, but for the moment I did not think and I did not realize how silly it all was; especially in the light of the great affection between us,—and to think, Charles, that this was our first quarrel. In time we will look back to that ridiculous evening and how we will laugh! And when your head is on my breast and all is still and peaceful,—oh, how foolish it will all seem!

Anyway, dearest, when I left you last night I felt at once a great piercing pain as though something had gone into my heart,—but just for a moment,—for then came a feeling of great emptiness, as though something had been taken away from me that was really part of my body. And as I lay in bed I pretended that we were already married and I was holding you in my arms and smoothing away the troubled wrinkles on your forehead, and I thought I felt your strong arms pressing me close to you. And all was forgiven and all forgotten.

But, alas! I could not sleep because I felt that what happened was my fault and all due to my stubbornness. And now, after thinking it over, I am certain that it was. For whatever happened I should never have acted so coldly, and, dearest, you should not have listened to me but you should have taken me into your arms by sheer force . . . I should only have protested for a moment and thrown my head back out of reach,—and it all would have melted with the first kiss. Oh, Charles, don't let me be so stubborn again, for I really don't mean to be. It is just an impulse, and it is, fortunately quickly over. I did not like the way that terrible girl danced with you and I made the worst of it. Montmartre has become awful. But I know, darling,

that you could not help it and that you . . . Why do I do such stupid things? And you, who are so big and generous, should not have allowed me. Yes, instead of trying to reason with me you should have kissed me then and there and I would have realized how foolish it all was.

Then you took me home and we sat in the cab like a pair of stuffed puppets;—for the first time in almost two years we sat stiffly and you did not put your arm around me. And when you asked if I would call you on the telephone in the morning, as I always do, I said coldly, ‘Perhaps.’ I really meant, ‘Certainly I would,’ but that same stubbornness prevented me from saying so.

It is now eight o’clock in the morning and I have hardly slept a wink because of a horrid dream and the terrible feeling of how wrong I have been. It is too early to talk to you and besides I could not say all this on the telephone, so I will hurry and send this over to you by the janitor’s boy.

Charles, darling, don’t be late tonight; I will be waiting impatiently and saving a million kisses all for you and for you only. Oh, how worried I was last night after I left you. Before I lit the light in my room I looked down into the street and there you stood in a daze under the lamp and the cab door was open and the driver was leaning over to hear where you wanted to go, and I could see you hesitate with your hat still in your hand and a troubled look on your face. I should have opened the window and called down to you, but I did not. But tonight, darling, I will kiss away the frown and it will never return, never, never, never.

Then I had such a horrid dream last night that I must tell you about, but I wish I were a writer and could record it exactly as I dreamed it. When I went to bed I tossed and tossed about and could not get to sleep until finally it seems I did fall asleep but I think it was only for a few minutes, though it seemed ages and ages, for I awoke with a terrible start. I dreamed a horrible sort of thing, about soldiers who were dashing through the woods on horseback and they wore large flowing white capes and they lashed their horses with whips made of silver wire. At first in the distance you could see nothing but the white capes and the spark-like

flashes made by the whips in the moonlight. What I was doing in the woods I do not know. Suddenly I found I was quite undressed and that the riders were all dashing forward. Then I ran as fast as I could, but closer and closer could I hear the snapping and whistling noises of the silver wire whips and a rolling rumble made by the breaking of branches and the pounding of a thousand hoofs. I ran.

Suddenly I came to a high cliff and beneath me lay the sea, quiet and still. The peace I longed for was there. The moon seemed to cover its entire surface which was smooth like a silver plate. Then for a moment I thought the riders were lost but suddenly I again heard them approach, and now they were almost upon me. I got as close to the edge as possible, but they made a half-circle about me. Then all at once the horses stood up with their fore legs high in the air and I could see the pulsing veins distended on their bellies and the blood pouring out of the cuts lashed open by the wire whips. The riders themselves looked horrible. They had dark grey faces, but I could not see any eyes. Then I shrieked and threw myself from the cliff.

It seemed ages that I was falling. Falling and falling. The bottom seemed miles away, but glancing upward I could see that the figures on the cliff were trying to signal me. They were pointing to something most anxiously; but I could not make out what it was. I was falling fast and they seemed to grow smaller and smaller and they held up something that looked like a silver statue. Then, before I knew it, I was in the water swimming out from the shadow of the cliff that towered over me like a night of rock. When I looked up again I could again see the figures at the very brink, like little white doves against the sky, and as I looked closer I could see them swinging the figure back and forth and with one great toss they hurled it out in my direction. I could see it over me like a white ribbon cutting through the air. It had a most uncanny appearance and I began to swim away as hard as I could,—but it seemed to follow me and I wanted to scream but my breath was gone,—and I tried to call you, darling, but I could not say your name. Suddenly the statue struck the sea with a terrific splash and

the water boiled up white like hot milk and covered me all over and dragged me under. It was then that I awoke.

Oh, darling, what a dream! I write you about it while it is still fresh in my mind. I hope it will be all forgotten by the time I see you. Please, dearest, telephone to me as soon as you get this and say that you forgive me for last night. And come early this evening. I must hurry now for the janitor's boy will be going to school and I want him to be sure to take this to you on his way. All my love and kisses are for you, darling.

Always yours—R.

.

The janitor was quite a stupid fellow and when he was ordered to appear before the commissioner he brought his boy and his wife and a brother who was a tailor and also the grocer from around the corner. They all sat in a row. The janitor kept rubbing his nose with a large colored handkerchief that he would unfold and fold up again.

"Have you seen this letter before?" The commissioner held up a blue envelope.

"Yes."

"When?"

"Monday morning . . . between eight and nine o'clock."

"Who gave it to you?"

"Mademoiselle."

"Why? Why did she give it to you?"

"To give to the boy to deliver."

"Did you give it to the boy?"

"Yes."

"At what time did you give it to him?"

"Just before he went to school."

"What did you say when you gave him the letter?"

"I told him to bring it over, right away, before he went to school and give it to Monsieur Charles. . . . Right away."

"Do you know if he did so?"

"I don't know."

"When did he deliver the letter?"

"I don't know."

"Why did he not take it over at once?"

"I don't know. Ask him yourself," then turning to the boy he shouted. "Why did you not take it over at once? Why do you not do what you are told? Didn't I order you to deliver it at once? Well, why didn't you? Why didn't you! Tell them yourself!" He again unfolded his handkerchief and scratched his nose. The boy squirmed in his seat.

"What is your name?" he was asked.

"Bozzie."

"Did your father give you this letter?"

"Yes."

"Why did you not take it over as you were instructed?"

"I was late."

"Did you stop on the way to play?"

"No."

"Then what made you late?"

"I don't know."

"How did you know you were late?"

"I saw other boys running."

"So you ran too?"

"Yes."

"Why are you afraid to be late?"

"Because I was late last week and they hit me with a ruler."

"Who hit you?"

"Teacher."

"Where did she hit you?"

The boy held out his hands and hung his head.

"What did you do with the letter when you went to school?"

"I put it in my pocket."

"Why did you not deliver it when you came out at noon?"

"I forgot."

"And the letter was in your pocket all this time?"

"Yes."

"When did you discover it?"

"At night when it was time to go to bed."

"Then you went out to deliver it?"

"Yes."

"But you did not deliver it to Monsieur Charles?"

"There were police at the door and they took the letter away from me."

"You know now why the police were there?"

"Yes, Papa told me."

"You know that Monsieur Charles waited for the letter until nine o'clock at night and that he shot himself because it did not arrive?"

The boy was silent.

"You should have delivered it in the morning."

"I did not want to be late for school."

"And then you forgot?"

The boy was silent and moved nervously in his chair. The old janitor again unfolded his colored handkerchief and rubbed his nose. His wife moved her fingers with a jerky motion as though she were knitting socks and the tailor and the grocer cast their eyes to the floor. The commissioner dipped his pen in the ink and wrote on a large sheet. At one time he looked up over his glasses and said to the boy, "What did you say your name was?"

"Bozzie."

Then he removed his glasses and said, "Very well,—you may all go home." They all hurried for the door. The janitor was the first to squeeze through and the boy was the last.

CARL RAKOSI

IMPRESSIONS

THE eyes are centered here
on this assumptive face,
with flowers by her cheek,
a moment as the eyes near
for the sight of that fraction,
only her eyes!

An uncle tips his high hat
and escorts her. Is it Sunday
that he bares his bright skull,
playing the uncle with all his flesh,
or just a fop's way on the avenue,
meeting skull with skull?

The merchant, Fagus, on her other side,
considers, leaves his name
and message on a card:
"Collect my follies in a vase.
Just a bouquet from an admirer."

The uncle and the lady time their strides,
and Fagus picks his way to comfort.

Little mood is to be gathered
from these sheepskin faces,
drumtight and wandering,
unless as primitive,
I move my bulk no nearer,
(brideless light affair)
but pass them with retentive eyes,
manifest and lonely.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I. BEFORE AND AFTER

Iron cities swim upon the sea,
And tailored millions travel
Across lacustrine gravel;
Digging the foundations for an electric sign
They found a mammoth's tooth and a Roman bottle of wine.

Ten years—ten years—
Shall bring you many changes and alter hopes to tears.

The horse has gone on to eternity.
In our Hispano-Suizas cushioned, soft,
We gaze aloft
And see the winged thing cut across the sky.

The gondola is going;
The chug of motor-boats will rack those walls,
Explode across the halls
Once stirred to melody by the tide's soft flowing.

The negro thinks the missionary
Speaks with departed spirits upon his telephone;
So he has grown
No longer black and upright but morose and chary.

New millionaires and movie-stars combine
To make a dumb show of the Vatican;
Oshkosh to Compostella is a span,
The Dalai Lama asks an actress out to dine.

The white mob conquers the worn-out world to-day,
Before the hosts of yellow, black, and red;

Civilized, white, and barbarous, we will stay
Before we are to outer darkness shed.

As moving through music,
Repeating, rising, suffering and crying—
Yet slowly and inevitably
And darkly dying—
I pause a breathless moment
To collect my dreams—
Now all of them that mattered
Is long burnt out, it seems.

Kisses upon a hilltop
Where rhododendrons ran aflame
Against a wall of glittering leaves;
Cool through the twilight moved your fresh bright body,

Bringing me offerings of joy.
Beware of love's late fire,
From its black traces you will never part,
Your heart must turn to water, and your brightest flame
destroy.

There was a blaze of hopes that came to nothing,
And there was shining wine,
There was a city full of lights and colours,
And there was youth at play
Swift as a dancer leaping
Through rain of roses over Tyrian marble
To catch applause.
There was a blackened gibbous shape at midnight rising
Of which no one, till later, knew the cause.

Ten years—ten years—
Will conquer youth and quell your hopes and fears.

Suddenly, with a laugh,
The operator changed the scene;
Darkness fell on the Russian Ballet curtain,
People went asking each other what had happened,

Trains full of smoky soldiers sped on Paris:
I stood sagely regarding—
With thoughts grown grim and cold—
Midsummer snow.

Ten years—ten years—
Shall I have ever done with all their hopes and fears?

Or shall I approach rapidly,
Like an old ship with sails bent to the gale—
But with its dark hull rolling beneath it,
Rotting and letting in the conquering water,
The whirlpool wherein I collapse
At the latter end of the world?

2. THE RIVER FLOWS

Emerging with the daybreak,
Drifting in silence down a sluggish river,
Between two banks dividing
Which held the summer between them firm forever,
I saw the cottonwoods
Receding southwards,
The arms of the cypress
Touch the horizon,
The great white pelicans
Far away, beating and fluttering their outstretched wings.

At Cairo, the ranks of the corn stood up: a plumed immortal army.
We drifted on in a sunset of rosy heat—
There was a flatboat hanging alongside laden with green melons—
A passion-flower vine upon a whitewashed wall.

At St. Louis we waited all morning with the roar of the trucks cutting across the cobbles,
The river swirling through the great arches of the bridge above us,

The mules flicking their ears against the flies.

Vicksburg of yellow bluffs, Natchez of tumbling houses—
The low banks we felt for in the darkness.

At New Orleans we tied to the levee in the quiet of early
morning,
We wakened to see the city washed clean by colourless day-
light,
City once seen in midwinter glory, now drowsing in torrid
silence.

And the river took me—
The river which flowed through my dreams and which goes
on still through my heart,
The masculine yellow Mississippi that the railroads had
made forgotten,
The river of Spanish explorers, of canebrakes and floods,
the pathway of war that cut through the heart of my
south.

I saw it once—I see it now forever:
For, with the next spring,
It was time to go.
Back to grey Europe
Shivering under the dark cloud that hung greedily poised
above it.

Manhattan, opulent and daring, faded—
The broad-shaded southern town that I loved went out of
existence—

The deep jade of the redwoods about San Francisco, the
glowing fire of their trunks, disappeared from life,
The stony hillsides of New England, their sparse white
farmhouses, followed—
The hard grey streets of Chicago running relentlessly for-
ward into the wild blue lake,
These could not keep me back.

There dropped on them all the calm of a green-wooded harbour,
Terraced streets and belfry by the shore—
Skeleton clippers standing at attention
Amid a world at war.

3. THE SHIP GOES DOWN

Suddenly from the deck a proud still face
Too far away to help, too old to dare,
Flashed and it darkened as the ship went down
On Europe never more to be the same.

There were guns, guns, looking at me,
Guns pointing east and west and north and south;

Between their lips I fled
Out far upon the snow,
Towards the summit dark amid the clouds
Where none would ever follow.

Caught in the whirl, we drift
Backward and forth, this side and every way,
For some the darkness will not ever lift:
Did I win through that day?

In racking clamour, two years fled
To take their places with ten million dead.

Upon a summit hid in mist
I wondered what the future held in view?
A cross, a resurrection from the tomb?
Or merely nothingness?

A ship across the West drew breath and paused—
Sunset-orange and maroon—
There is naught to do but go.

4. THAT WHICH WAS LEFT

Thickening heat of an August morning,
Through which my heart laboured and plunged
As a dray-cart going over cobbles.
The pavements turning above me
As in a drunken dream.

He stood upon the platform, and he saw
The crowd assembled, sixty feet below—
The iron sides of the tank
Twelve feet across, the disk of shallow water,
Into which he must plunge.
The wind was soft and easy
Hushed and half-wondering the crowd attended.
He turned his back upon it all,
And toppled off.

His body cut the air.
Twice did he turn before he touched the bottom,
Two somersaults and you will find
Me—the resounding harp-like sea shut in a narrow shell
Twelve feet across—
He shot into the water.
An instant later, stood up dripping—
Few cared to clap their hands.

Still moving through time's warp and weft,
The world, like a diver, falls.
The world is of its best bereft,
Best save unaltered what is left,—
Heed you, whom darkness calls.

Dry years of eclipse; the summer laboured on and on
Like an old voice talking in a long-deserted room,
The slave yearned for new slavery, the free man despaired
of dawn.
At spring a million flowers enwreathed a forgotten tomb.

He went, the one in whose eyes I had trusted,
On whose breast I had leaned
As John leaned on another breast and heard the bread
Broken—the sound of loosing star from star—
Thrice did he beckon to me from the tomb,
Thrice I denied him after he departed.

And he with the grey eyes,
Writhing his lips into a more bitter smile,
Of iron compassion at dull, joyless fate,
He too moved darkly out of my life, forever.
He left a voice that sang in endless night,
The song of man, forgotten of the gods.

I heard it plainly on the barren moor,
Where the cold wind amid the grass
Rose up and strove to pass
Dark, quiet monuments of weather-beaten stone.
The wind—it bore a tone
Of vast impersonal things
That for our sorrow do not grow the lesser,
Though time goes by them on unbending wings.

This that I heard made all that I have seen,
Like to a theatre in which scene on scene,
Appears without an actor—and where no applause
Breaks forth—these fancies in the brain, what is their cause?

“Man did the gods make
Nature’s sole master;
Broad-browed and lordly,
King of earth’s harvest.
Many the gifts they gave to him,
Much joy he won therefrom;
He, whom they spurn now—
Outcast from their splendour.

“Weak, puling, foolish,
He strives to remember

His kingdom, forgotten,
Pitiful, wavering,
Last remnant of man!
With him shall the gods not reckon,
Neither length of days,
Nor love requited,
Nor lasting renown
Shall be his."

After a year of rain, old dreams came back
And once more flourished, maybe inly grew
Within a field unseen—if the last track
Back to that magic past I only knew!
Sometimes it seems in me—again in you.

Strive then no longer,
Waken or slumber,
Labour or suffer,
With your small day be content.
Yet be at peace within your inner mind
And you will find
Far, far beyond all loneliness and pain
Grey memories ripening under heavy rain.

AVRAHM YARMOLINSKY

THE SOUL OF MAN UNDER BOLSHEVISM

BEING AN UN-PLATONIC DIALOGUE WHEREOF THE PERSONS
ARE DRAWN FROM LIFE

TIME: *Spring, 1924.* PLACE: *A Moscow Flat.*

The large casual room has no scruples about being a combined parlor, bedroom and bath. The grand piano, the Bokhara tapestry, and some unhung canvases suggest that its inhabitants have traffic with the arts. Indeed, this is the home of Comrade Ivanov, editor of the review Kris (the telescopic word for Krasnoye Iskusstvo: Red Art). He is just now a mile away from this room, in a prison cell. An abstract composition in planes which is also a lantern lights up the amber-blond hair of his pretty wife, who plays the part of the Hostess-in-Spite-of-Herself. The peasants in the khaki and peaked helmets of the Red Army who are guarding the door and the telephone look frightfully bored. For the past six hours they have had to listen to the talk of all the persons who during that period have entered the room, and so fallen under arrest. These include a stage director, a factory manager from the provinces, an American senator, a returned native, an ethnographer, a Christian anarchist, a professor of Marxism, and a Leningrad painter of the Suprematist school. The sentries' eyes brighten only when they light on the heavily loaded dinner table against the rear wall. On the window-panes, left, are etched the bulbous moon-lit cupolas of a church built under Catherine, and far beyond, the snow-crueted battlements of the Chinatown wall erected under Ivan the Terrible. Except for the Senator's remarks, the conversation is conducted in Russian, which is here englished for the reader's convenience. He must imagine the returned native, who brought the Senator to the house, to act as his interpreter.

HOSTESS (*to the Senator*). For my part, I adore America! Charlie Chaplin is a genius. I would give a year of my life to see your sky-scrapers. Think of cities with railroads under the earth and railroads in the air! The gigantic factories! The Taylor system! The beautiful machinery! The standardization! The speed alone! In Petro—I mean Leningrad, our one European city, there is just one lift running, but with you every peasant has a motor and a radio.

FACTORY MANAGER (*a fresh-complexioned, level-headed young man, with a faint gleam of imagination in his pale blue eye*). How about the America drawn by Upton Sinclair?

HOSTESS. Of course, I don't swallow the United States whole. But my point is that they have plenty to teach us.

FACTORY MANAGER. A loan would be more to the point than a lesson.

PROFESSOR (*a pink-cheeked, blond-bearded man; except for the dark high-necked blouse which reaches his hips and is belted at the waist, he looks like the hero of an early nineteenth century novel*). Give us the time and equipment and the Soviet Union will accomplish things undreamt of in the American philosophy. We'll do away with all sorts of old rubbish,—all the hampering clutter of old habits, old gear, old aims, old myths.

HOSTESS. Like the myth of the monogamous man.

PROFESSOR. He, by the way, was created for her protection by the economically dependent woman.

HOSTESS. I don't pretend that Communism will solve all human problems, but it will certainly solve the woman problem. When household drudgery has been largely reduced by mechanical means and cooperative methods, and when children are cared for by the State, men and women will be free for unlimited adventures and unguessed satisfactions.

SENATOR (*a tall corpulent genial man, who looks keen because his are the only sharply creased trousers and stiff collar in the company*). But my dear lady! (*He blushes for her, since she does not blush for herself.*)

FACTORY MANAGER. You think that if you remove all restrictions, men will go to the dogs; that the moral code is

a biological necessity; that the strongest race is the one that is the strictest in what concerns the family. We have a higher opinion of the human race. Of course, our laws protect the weak,—that is the child and the mother.

SENATOR. Your laws! Why, under these laws you can get a divorce while you wait; and not only that, but you can get it for a song.

RETURNED NATIVE (*a Russian resident of Chicago who falls between the stools of his two allegiances, and would be easy on neither*). You're used to the American idea of making divorce a luxury only the well-to-do can afford. Now our friends here have figured out a way to bring it within the reach of everyone.

SENATOR. And the grounds for divorce here! A man can put away his wife because she goes to church too often; a woman can get rid of her husband because she doesn't like his politics!

PROFESSOR. I suppose you think religion and politics are trifles compared to infringing the seventh commandment. As though the chastity of the mind were less than the integrity of the body. A woman's honor is not a part of her anatomy. A bourgeois insists on modern plumbing, but he tolerates the most medieval ideas!

ETHNOGRAPHER (*the oldest, ugliest, and cleverest person present*). The middle-class mind is not the only one that is furnished with anachronisms. One of my students who spent the summer among the villagers in the far north-west made friends with a young peasant whose father was a hunter and whose grandfather was the local medicine-man. The boy had inherited the old man's magic formulæ and recipes, and had the reputation of a magician. He was cock o' the walk for other reasons besides. He had a way with the girls, and he was also the village bootlegger, making a good living out of poor vodka. This was the lad who was the first of the lot to enter the local Comsomol (Communist Union of Youth), and my informer found in his possession a copy of Bukharin's *ABC of Communism*, with recipes for love philtres written on the fly-leaf. He is now a student at a medical school.

(A knock on the door. The sentry standing there pulls his helmet into place and straightens his weary shoulders. The company cheerfully attends the arrival of the next victim. Enter the Doctor,—a tall, tired-looking man in a shabby fur-coat and a deerskin cap. His diet must be as thin as his hair; his scholar's stoop is more noticeable than his bedside manner). . . .

DOCTOR. Good-evening. Where is the patient?

HOSTESS. There is no one sick here. You must have mistaken the flat. Our stairs are so dark.

DOCTOR *(turning to go)*. I must beg your pardon.

SENTRY. You cannot leave this room, citizen. You are arrested.

DOCTOR. Arrested! But . . .

ALL *(at once)*. I am also under arrest.

HOSTESS *(to the Doctor)*. It is unfortunate. My husband was taken away last night. Whoever comes into the flat will have to stay here until the Gepeoo [Secret Service] is satisfied that all his accomplices have been trapped. As he is innocent, he has no accomplices, and as he has no accomplices, you may be detained here some time.

DOCTOR *(slipping out of his coat with the resignation of one used to sharing other people's troubles)*. I see.

FACTORY MANAGER. Your patient is out of luck, doctor.

STAGE DIRECTOR *(a man with the frame of an athlete, the features of a mare, and the gestures of a Latin)*. Your patient probably keeps warm with fever, anyway. But the men I should be rehearsing must be nearly dead with cold. I'm staging this new play in a foundry, and after work hours the place is as chilly as a frozen sturgeon.

HOSTESS. Sit down, doctor. Here's a clean glass for your tea. That's real butter.

FACTORY MANAGER. We've just been hearing about one of your colleagues, doctor.

DOCTOR. A Moscow man?

ETHNOGRAPHER. Oh, no. He's up around Novgorod, a thousand miles from nowhere.

DOCTOR *(sighing)*. Poor devil, what a life!

ETHNOGRAPHER. Don't waste your pity. The fellow is

a village medicine man. He has all the elements and all the demons in his pharmacopeia.

DOCTOR. Ah, a medicine man,—that's another story.

ETHNOGRAPHER. True enough. It's not generally recognized that witchcraft is as rife in the villages as typhus used to be. The Bushman is better known than the Russian peasant.

RETURNED NATIVE. Now I see how you could have undertaken this Communist experiment: it's nothing but belief in magic.

PROFESSOR. Science looks like magic to the ignorant.

CHRISTIAN ANARCHIST (*a man with the combined poise of one at once aristocratic and elephantine; having the pride of his Christian humility; and wearing a tweed suit bought at Harrod's during his exile twelve years previous*). Magic is the religion of the primitive, and science is the religion of the modern savage.

DOCTOR (*who has been brooding over his own grievances*). Science! Science! Yes, but in the meantime, what's to become of the scientist?

PROFESSOR. The doctors are in the same boat with the teachers. Neither group is, properly speaking, producing. They must rely on the surplus accumulated by the State.

FACTORY MANAGER (*to the Doctor*). When it comes to grumbling, you intellectuals are worse than the peasants. What can the Government do? It has no money. You can't suck rubles out of your thumb.

DOCTOR. I'm not complaining. I can get along on tea and herring and black bread. What I really miss are the technical journals from abroad, especially the American Journal of Archeology.

CHRISTIAN ANARCHIST. What has that to do with medicine?

DOCTOR. Nothing at all. You see, I'm a physician, but I am also an archeologist, and then I give English lessons. It's the way one scrapes along. As a matter of fact, I'm hoping to go on an excavating expedition this summer. We'll kill our own food, make our own shelter, and aside from the work we're doing, live like the beasts of the field.

ETHNOGRAPHER (*appreciatively*). During summer vacations I give each of my students a pair of boots and send them off to shift for themselves. I get some good field work done that way.

SENATOR. We don't treat our research men any too well at home, but as for your way,—why, you might as well give them a Buddhist begging-bowl.

RETURNED NATIVE. You haven't had a revolution in the States, Senator, yet.

PAINTER (*a moon-faced fellow, with hair that resembles a wig as a perfect apple resembles a waxen one. He wears a suit that might have been cut from his mother's blanket; there is something woolly, too, about his mind; he rouses from his dream and asks with real curiosity*). When will you make your revolution in America?

RETURNED NATIVE. Don't you know, my friend, that it has already taken place? Why, the Senator's mother is one of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

SENATOR (*abruptly changing the subject, not liking the company to imagine his mother as anything like their own Daughters of the Revolution*). Let me get this clear: do you really propose to abolish the family?

PROFESSOR. Eventually.

SENATOR (*with a wave of homesickness as he involuntarily asks*). Why not now?

PROFESSOR. Because the State is too poor to establish public nurseries and communal restaurants and laundries.

DOCTOR. Communal laundries! You'd never see your shirts again.

FACTORY MANAGER. That's just the trouble: we're so uncivilized. What we need most is elementary decency in home life.

ETHNOGRAPHER. One thing seems certain. Under Communism man will live under healthy conditions, and so he will follow healthy instincts. A well-nourished adult doesn't spoil his digestion with sweetmeats.

FACTORY MANAGER. That's not the only thing. Consider that Communism means above all else a society based on reason. It can have no place for the middle-class notion

of love, "the irrational passion" which Turgenev celebrated. Love, like everything else, must be rationalized.

PROFESSOR. To subordinate the business of breeding the race to the pastime of making love or the desire to make money is the essence of the irrational order under which we have been living.

FACTORY MANAGER. Woman is already ceasing to be a mystery because she is becoming a comrade.

THEATRE DIRECTOR. In our life, as in our theatre, illusions are in bad taste.

HOSTESS. Precisely. Certainly as far as my sex is concerned, it has nothing to lose but its chains. It has a world to gain. And it's not all in the future, either. Today, a man shares the household chores with his wife, and if they both happen to be Party members, he will stay home to cook the meal or iron the clothes while she attends her meeting.

FACTORY MANAGER. Well, I don't know about that. A good Party member may very likely be a poor family man. Up our way most of the young Communists pick non-partisan girls for wives. They say that if you marry a Comsomol girl there'll be no one to cook the meals or mind the kids.

RETURNED NATIVE (*to the hostess*). There's still another side to this vaunted sex equality: if, as we are told, woman is no longer a mystery, how can romance survive?

THEATRE DIRECTOR. You're sentimental, like all the Americans. The wonder is that mankind has survived in spite of the toxins of romance.

RETURNED NATIVE. But romance has its uses, after all. It's only by investing war with romantic glamor that you get men to accept the filth and stench of battle,—and you Communists are as militant as any of the imperialist nations.

PROFESSOR. I admit we're as militant as they, and more so, even if our ends are as fire and water. History has given us a dirty job, and we have no more illusions about it than the street-cleaner about the manure he sweeps away. The times in which we live, and possibly those in which our sons and our sons' sons must live, will witness the downfall of one social order, and the difficult victory of another. It is an

age of ruthless warfare, and we must make a fighter of every man, every woman, and every child. We don't like it: we abhor violence, but we abhor even more to see the times so out of joint, and the cursed spite is that we were born to set them right. We must mobilize our intelligence and regiment our emotions: love our friends, hate our enemies.

CHRISTIAN ANARCHIST. Capital! The only thing lacking in your eloquence to make it a perfect replica of the Czar's war manifestoes is the remark that you are acting by the grace of God. I would be hard put to it to choose between his government and yours: both are parasites; both are based on coercion. You would teach brotherly love with the knout. Your Communism is no more like the true Communism than sticks tied with little apples are like an honest orchard. Any man worth his salt would endure exile, prison, and death rather than submit to government by brute force or wage war on his brothers.

HOSTESS (*with a gesture of compassionate dismissal*). He's a Tolstoyan!

SENATOR. I wish I could agree with him, but he seems to me as foolish as you Communists seem dangerous.

PROFESSOR. From our point of view the Tolstoyans are as dangerous as they are foolish. They don't see that you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs. Fortunately, they're as rare as white crows.

FACTORY MANAGER (*continuing to talk as though the Christian anarchist were not present in the flesh*). It's their misfortune, not their fault,—they were born too soon. We too hate war and we too look forward to the time when the State, as Lenin predicted, will vanish into thin air. But we know it won't come of turning the other cheek.

(*A knock at the door. Enter with a rush a little girl, with red cheeks and yellow hair, on which she wears no kerchief, as she has just run over from across the street.* KATYA looks somewhat older than her thirteen years. Her eyes are bright with anticipation of the rehearsal of a school play.)

KATYA (*to the Hostess*). Mama wanted to know if you could stay with the baby tonight. I have a rehearsal at school, and Mama has a meeting.

HOSTESS. Impossible, little dove.

KATYA. Of course,—you're having a party. I wish I could stay here, but I must go and find someone else.

SENTRY (*stopping her, visibly embarrassed*). Sorry. You're under arrest.

KATYA (*astonished, noticing the Sentry for the first time*). Me!

HOSTESS (*to the Sentry*). But really, comrade, you can't arrest a mere child. And her mother waiting for her!

KATYA. I'm not a child! (*Enjoying her importance*) I'm big enough to be arrested. But what have I done, comrade?

CHRISTIAN ANARCHIST. My dear child, you have done nothing beyond being born at the wrong time and entering a room at the wrong moment.

DOCTOR. It's the height of absurdity!

HOSTESS. It's really no more absurd than that they should have arrested Ivanov. (*To Katya*) You'll have to stay here, Katinka, with the rest of us, until the thing is cleared up. Sit down and have some bread and jam.

KATYA. Poor Mama! She won't know what's happened. And there's my rehearsal! And there's her meeting!

PAINTER. I'm missing a meeting at the Institute, myself.

ETHNOGRAPHER. I'm missing three meetings at three institutes.

RETURNED NATIVE. If meetings were horses all Russians would ride.

HOSTESS. They can't keep you here much longer. The whole affair is a misunderstanding. Ivanov will come home, and then you can all depart in peace.

SENATOR (*to Katya*). Well, and how does the little girl like going to school?

KATYA. It's all right. There's just one teacher I don't like. She talks so much we never get a chance to say anything. I was glad the other day when the class monitor gave her a bad mark at the end of the lesson.

SENATOR. Do you mean to say you children rate your teachers?

RETURNED NATIVE. It's very reasonable. It would be

quite in line to have the departing servant give a character to her mistress, to be presented to her successor.

SENATOR. And what do you learn at school?

KATYA. Well, yesterday we went to Red Rosa, the textile factory. We saw the way the looms worked, and we talked to the women. And you ought to see the nursery at the factory. The babies are too cunning! One of them was Octobered last week.

SENATOR. "Octobered"?

RETURNED NATIVE. You see, the revolution occurred in October, and so Octobering is the name of the ceremony which replaces baptism for the Communists. And you should hear the names they pick!

ETHNOGRAPHER. The choicest I've heard yet is Diamata, a girl's name standing for dialectic materialism. I know of cases where adults changed their names from the homespun Russian of Popoff or Nikolsky to Danton and Marat.

CHRISTIAN ANARCHIST. Baptism! (*Turning to Katya*) Do you believe in God?

KATYA. No. I'm too big. When I first went to school and the teachers said there was no God, I didn't believe them, and we children used to say our prayers in secret. But when we grew up and studied science we saw that the teachers were right, and that God is only a bogey invented by the priests.

SENATOR. Think of children praying in secret!

CHRISTIAN ANARCHIST. That's not so bad. Atheism is better than the piety of the average pew-holder.

SENATOR. Why can't you Communists keep hands off religion, and leave it to a man's private conscience? You lose a lot of good men this way, who might otherwise join the Party.

RETURNED NATIVE. Don't you see, the Communists take religion seriously,—as seriously as most men take business. They hold that a religion that's worth anything affects a man's behaviour as well as his thinking.

PROFESSOR. You can't expect us to hold with a Church that was the accomplice of the old regime. At any rate, religion obviously distracts man's attention from the immense

job of organizing life on this planet in a rational manner. That is the one task ahead of us, and everyone is concerned with it: the clerk and the soldier, the miner as well as the mime.

THEATRE DIRECTOR. I wish all the theatre crowd could see it that way. But so many of us are, as Prutkov¹ said, like sausages: we hold just what we were stuffed with. And having been stuffed with the idea that audiences must either be amused, or else tickled by a pretense of pity and terror, these people can't see the real work ahead of them. I'm sick of going by the theory that I must cater to a lot of work-weary creatures who are paying me so much to entertain them for three hours. I'm sick of making the stage a picture-book for sophisticated babies. I'm sick of feeding people such adulterated stuff as vicarious experience. I want the bare stage of a factory loft,—an audience of workmen, who'll give me no more than fifteen minutes in which to send them back to their benches kindled with renewed energy and live ideas. This is an age of action and struggle. I'm part of it. I take sides. I don't want to hold my audience spell-bound: I want to split it into two antagonistic camps. I don't want to make men laugh or cry; I want to make them think and act.

RETURNED NATIVE. I agree with Synge that the drama, like the symphony, doesn't teach or prove anything. I've seen some of the things you put on the boards. They nauseate me. All that I enjoyed was the scene-shifting, which, owing to the absence of the curtain, was done in full view of the spectators.

THEATRE DIRECTOR. The spectacle of building has a fascination for everybody: there are always crowds around scaffoldings. You may be right. For my part, I don't give a fig for the drama as such.

HOSTESS. You want to abolish the theatre. That's just what Ivanov says of the other forms of so-called art. We don't want canvases and statues and knick-knacks. An object has beauty, to use a word which really means little

¹Prutkov is a character invented by a group of writers and credited with a great many witticisms.

to me, only insofar as it serves the purpose for which it was made.

SENATOR. But surely, madam, your Bokhara wall-hanging is not useful, but is to be prized for its beauty, while your telephone is hardly beautiful and yet most useful.

(At the psychological moment the 'phone rings and the sentry in charge of it takes up the receiver with due impressiveness.)

SENTRY *(speaking with the loud voice of one unused to and faintly afraid of the instrument)*. Yes, I hear you. *(Takes out a notebook)* Who's calling? And your father's name? *(Writes in his note-book)* Where are you calling from? *(Writes in his note-book)* What is the message? No, nobody's here. Can't tell when they'll be back. What did you say the message was? *(Repeating what he writes in his note-book)* "Whatthedevisityourbusiness",—No, no *(scratching his head)* that can't be it. I didn't understand you. Please repeat. What? What number do you want? *(Writes in his note-book)* It's the wrong number. *(With a gentle smile for the company, he hangs up the receiver.)*

HOSTESS. Now you see how beautiful the telephone is! But seriously, if I had to choose, it's the telephone I'd take. I am ready to admit that in the past art was socially valuable by holding the mirror up to nature. But we have no use for mirrors now. What we need is weapons.

DOCTOR. In practice that means that one of our painters designs tapering trousers to keep out the wind, and that a sculptor achieves an oven with glass doors so that you can see how your *pirogi* are getting on.

RETURNED NATIVE. I saw one of those in a Chicago kitchen last year. I assure you it showed no touch of the sculptor's thumb.

ETHNOGRAPHER. The belief that the artist should turn artisan may waste a gifted man, but it cannot seriously affect art.

DOCTOR. The Russian has always been like a child trying to step on the head of his own shadow. We can't get over the the habit of pooh-poohing axioms away. It would seem an accepted proposition that art is an autonomous activity,

and if its conventions may vary like a man's pulse, it couldn't exist without any. And yet you can't come into the company of Russian intellectuals without hearing the contrary upheld.

KATYA. I suppose people can't help being artists, poor things. My own mother is a music-teacher. But if I could be what I chose I'd be the General-in-Chief of the Red Army.

CHRISTIAN ANARCHIST. "And a little child shall lead them" . . . Without realizing it, Katya has made a pertinent contribution to your discussion. What place can the arts have in the heat and dust of battle?

FACTORY MANAGER. That's true enough. This is an age that can admit no truce until the battle for social justice is won. The hottest fights are still ahead of us. In this moment of respite all we can do is to wash up, and above all, oil the rifle. All this talk about art, and even this proletarian culture that everyone's stewing about, is just poppycock. It will be plenty of time to talk about culture after we've learned our letters. I'm just repeating what Trotzky says, —I agree with him absolutely.

PROFESSOR. The fact is that we Communists are in a peculiarly favorable position for the creation of a culture unexampled in the world's history. The culture of the kept class is as dead as Cæsar. The task of carrying on has fallen to a new class. We brace our shoulders to the burden of this mechanized civilization, which is becoming too heavy for the old world. The hope of a land of milk and honey which united the ancient Hebrews,—the hope of heaven whereby the Church held medieval society together,—are pale beside our hope. We alone possess an idea which makes for a common consciousness and out of which will come a great social art.

DOCTOR. That's all very nice. But look around you, and what do you see? Exhibits crowded with helpless daubs, symphonies botched by overworked musicians, a stage given over to ranting actors and cross-eyed scenic artists. And as for literature—(*he throws up his hands*).

THEATRE DIRECTOR. It's no use denying that in literature, as in the other arts, we've lost in craftsmanship. But

the main thing is that we're getting the kind of literature we need. We write as we live, with what's to be done as our chief concern, and with the behaviourist's distrust of introspection. Here as elsewhere we are breaking with tradition. For the psychological grubbing which used to be held up as Russia's great national game, we're substituting an interest in action.

DOCTOR. Precisely the opposite is true: we don't have the kind of writing we need. With one or two exceptions our writers have failed to promote the common consciousness which is the great feature of our time. The very language, which used to be the finely tempered instrument of the mind and the highroad to commerce between men, has been converted by too many of our scribblers into a locked room for private acrobatics.

PROFESSOR. I hold no brief for present-day literature. It has been of some service to the cause, but it has failed to express the essentially cerebral nature of the revolution. The general run of men writing today regard it as the elemental cataclysm which it emphatically is not. Our revolution is either a piece of social engineering, or it is nothing. The trouble is that our books are still being written by the remnant of the old intellectual class, and their way of thinking is nearer to the peasant's than to the worker's. But they're after all taking a fresh tack and aren't to be sneezed at.

PAINTER (*coming out of his torpor like a hen who proclaims that she has hatched a bomb-shell*). You say that the artists don't understand the revolution. You don't understand that the artists are making the revolution. I mean the real one. We're indifferent to squeezing color on canvas or knocking chips off marble. We're going to change the universe by changing man's perception of it. We'll tighten the ear-drum, refine the optic nerve, multiply the taste-buds, call forth new nerves with which to sense the world. Blind men see with their fingers. We are all blind in some way. We shall train people to make one sense help another until all the senses cooperate. We shall have a soviet of the senses, a commune of apprehension. And then the revolutionary change from the regime of the plane to the regime of the solid will be effected.

KATYA (*yawning openly, while the rest of the company, except the Painter, eye her sympathetically,—confidentially to the Hostess*). I wish they'd go back to God.

CHRISTIAN ANARCHIST. They will some day, little dove.

KATYA. I mean I wish they'd go on fighting about Him. I love to hear people do that.

FACTORY MANAGER. Curious, how the subject fascinates the immature. In a village out our way the young folks staged a debate on the existence of God. At the last moment they found there was no one to take the affirmative. They dispatched emissaries to the local priest, but he was sick. Then the committee went to the next village and were told the priest was away. Suspecting that he had run off in fear, they placed sentinels on all the roads to intercept the fugitive, and bring him back by main force to plead the cause of the Lord.

DOCTOR. I have always believed that we Russians are the most irreligious people in Christendom.

FACTORY MANAGER. And yet of course this religion thing still has more or less of a hold on the masses. I'll wager that in many villages the wife of a local Communist secretly ordered a mass for the salvation of Lenin's soul.

RETURNED NATIVE. Yes, it's a queer broth that's simmering over the fire of the revolution. There are new turnips in it and old shanks, and who knows what it will taste like in the end?

PROFESSOR. We don't know what the soup will taste like in the end, but we do know what we want to put into it. We don't want churches, we want factories. Let capitalist society keep its mysticism and idealism. We want science and hard-headed materialism. We want to examine all things by the one candle we've got: our intellect. We want to build a society on reason.

ETHNOGRAPHER. Reason is the true seed of revolution. The nineteenth century rationalized its desire to retain what it had gained in 1789 by preaching evolutionism, the imperceptible progress which could no more be assisted than it could be checked. The century ended by putting reason aside, and embracing the unconscious with the learned gesture of a *roué*.

RETURNED NATIVE. You worship reason as the French did when they had their fling. And yet you're afraid of reason left to itself. You distrust the mind of man as much as the Puritans distrusted human nature.

FACTORY MANAGER. Meaning what?

RETURNED NATIVE. You exalt the intellect, but you withdraw Plato from free circulation in your smaller public libraries.

PROFESSOR. Plato was the father of idealism.

RETURNED NATIVE. You want to rule by reason, but you don't trust people to read the eminently reasonable William James.

PROFESSOR. Was it reasonable to waste all that time and paper on the varieties of religious experience?

RETURNED NATIVE. You hope, whether you admit it or not, to create a race, or more properly, a world of supermen,—who will not only be able to support our difficult mechanical civilization, but who will literally move mountains and dictate to oceans; but you daren't let the ordinary citizens of the Soviet Union have a taste of Nietzsche.

PROFESSOR. Nietzsche was the arch-individualist, the exponent of a philosophy which is all one might expect from a pastor's son,—the essence of what the petty bourgeois wants to believe. Nothing could be more hostile to the Communist scheme of things.

RETURNED NATIVE. And your censorship!

ETHNOGRAPHER. There's no denying it's stupid.

CHRISTIAN ANARCHIST. Its disrespect of the human spirit is nothing short of brutal.

THEATRE DIRECTOR. You exaggerate. In the great drama of our revolution the censor is the comic relief. What could be funnier than the story a musician told me of how, in order to get a license to perform Bach's "Passion," he had to swear before the Committee on Political Education that no Church propaganda was intended, and that anyway the words couldn't be heard, as the music was polyphonic.

PROFESSOR. But it's a mistake to say, as you said a moment ago, that we don't trust the people. They understand,

however darkly, what is going on, and they're with us.

(As though to punctuate this declaration, the telephone rings, and the sentry takes up the receiver. As he listens, his face brightens and it is with a smile that he hangs it up and addresses the company.)

SENTRY. It's all right, comrades. Comrade Ivanov is released. You can all go home.

(Everyone rises, with varying expressions of relief, disgust, or amusement; and prepares to depart.)

KATYA. I may get to my rehearsal, after all!

THEATRE DIRECTOR. I won't get to mine.

ETHNOGRAPHER. I'm sure this was more enjoyable than any of the meetings I missed.

CHRISTIAN ANARCHIST *(with gentle irony)*. "Where two or three are gathered together"—

FACTORY MANAGER *(with innocent ignorance concluding the quotation)*. You're bound to have an argument.

DOCTOR. Talk is a sedative.

PROFESSOR. I wish it were a stimulant.

SENATOR *(to the Hostess, with unfailing courtesy)*. I must thank you, ma'am, for a most interesting evening.

HOSTESS. You must thank our Government.

RETURNED NATIVE. Honestly, the more I listen to you Communists, the more I realize how essentially religious you are. It's not simply that you've turned half your stages into pulpits, nor that you drape your heroes' graves in red, as though the blood of these martyrs were the seed of your church. It goes deeper than these outward and visible signs. If religion means anything, it means the conception of life as a valuable and purposeful thing, and a will to promote its purpose and its values. You have both the conception and the will.

PAINTER *(cloudily as ever)*. But we're atheists!

RETURNED NATIVE *(as he shoulders into his overcoat and gives an involuntary shrug)*. The author of *The Bolshevik Empress* has answered you when he said that it doesn't really matter dreadfully to God if a man thinks himself an atheist or not.

CURTAIN

FRANCIS FERGUSON

T. S. ELIOT AND HIS IMPERSONAL THEORY OF ART

MR. T. S. ELIOT is one of the important forces in modern American literature. He owes his importance to two facts: first, that he is an American who chooses to live in Europe in the face of our so-called intellectual awakening at home; secondly, that he is a poet and critic of great and recognized value abroad. As the editor of the *New Criterion* he is associated with a group—if such diverse personalities can be said to compose a group—which is beginning to set up a standard in Europe. Americans who read contemporary European literature are almost invariably led to classify the show according to Mr. Eliot's scheme, which he has expressed both poetically and in prose. I propose therefore to attempt to understand what this scheme is; an undertaking which is made difficult by Mr. Eliot's habits of discretion and allusiveness.

Like Mr. Irving Babbitt here, Mr. Read in England, and M. Maritain, M. Benda, M. Fernandez and many others in France, Mr. Eliot tries in his criticism to re-establish values which he believes the last few generations of poets have been losing. The most complete statement of his theory of the nature of the true literary art is found in his essay in the *Sacred Wood*, called *Tradition and the Individual Talent*. This essay falls into two parts, an explanation of the relation of the poet to the "dead poets, his ancestors," and an account of the creative process in the soul of the individual artist. In both parts Mr. Eliot is answering the question, how does the artist make his work objective, impersonal; how does he manage to secrete, so to speak, a new entity, with a real existence which is separate from the man who produced it? For he believes, and I think we may assume with him, that true art must be objective.

It is tradition which gives the poet a sense of something

larger than and outside himself; the mind of the race, with a past and a present, to which the individual must conform, and in the process give up his personality, if his art is not to remain subjective. "It involves," he says, "the historical sense, which we may call nearly indispensable to anyone who would continue to be a poet beyond his twenty-fifth year. . . . The historical sense compels a man to write, not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. . . . What happens is a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of the artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality." Notice that these remarks apply to the individual strictly only in so far as he is an artist; they touch him only at the moment of creation, when he is engaged in eliminating the dross of undigested emotion. They point to what may perhaps be called a purely *esthetic* discipline. The tradition they mean is a literary one, and the mind of the race is tacitly assumed to be the mind of the poets. But with these distinctions and reservations—to which we will return later—clearly in mind, we may accept Mr. Eliot's account as full of justice and insight.

His description of the process of creation in the mind of the individual is also profound. He compares the mind of the poet to a shred of platinum, in the presence of which oxygen and sulphur dioxide can combine to form sulphur trioxide. "This combination takes place only if the platinum is present; nevertheless the newly-formed acid contains no trace of platinum, and the platinum itself is apparently unaffected; has remained inert, neutral, unchanged. The mind of the poet is the shred of platinum. It may partly or exclusively operate on the experience of the man himself; but, the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates; the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material. . . . It is not the 'greatness,' the intensity of the emotions, the components,

but the intensity of the artistic process, the pressure, so to speak, under which the fusion takes place, that counts."

Up to this point we must recognize, I think, that Mr. Eliot has done much to clarify our conception of the impersonality of art; and all that he says about the difference between the esthetic and other emotions is pure gold. Where his criticism seems inadequate is in its failure to take account of the relation between art and human life, for in his account both of the rôle of tradition and of the operations in the artist's mind, the effect of his remarks is to separate the man from the artist and humanity from the art.

Take for example the literary tradition. His theory of this factor is true only of the *esthetic* discipline of the artist. His error is perhaps to mistake this value in developing the form of art, for a general value for art, which must also have its subject-matter. There is a sense in which the dead poet is the ancestor of the live one; but my belief is that this depends on whether the two poets belonged to the same society. They are related only in form, unless the conditions of life and thought to which they were subjected are similar. But in this second case their kinship is a human or ethical, not an artistic one. I believe Mr. Eliot would agree that the significance of art cannot be read apart from the society in which it grew, and that unless tradition of any kind is felt first of all as an answer to a common experience, it begets the attitude of passive and heavy decorum which Henry James adopted in England, instead of that active sense of continuous life which the English themselves show at their best. If put in this form, as I say, Mr. Eliot would undoubtedly agree; yet in his account of tradition there is nothing to show that he feels the impracticability, for the artist, of acknowledging only literary origins. For all he says to the contrary, poets might be an abstract society, like the laundresses of the economics text-books, who live by taking in each other's washing. If that were true, we should have to say that art had a truth beyond life, like that of religion—a reality somehow greater than that of the artist; sufficient, in fact, to absolve him from the responsibilities of personal life.

Thus if one follows out the results of Mr. Eliot's conception of the rôle of tradition in the making of poetry, one comes upon the implication that the value of art and human values are not related at all; and this leads us to examine again his story of the creative process in the individual, with this question in mind: how far does he desire to say that the artist and the man are separate? This question is difficult to answer, for in the essay we are discussing, Mr. Eliot halts tantalizingly "at the borders of metaphysics or mysticism." As a direct answer to our question we have only his remark that "poetry is not an expression of personality, but an escape from personality," or that "the more perfect the artist the more separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates." All that one can do thus far, therefore, is to note that there is nothing in the attitude he expresses to differentiate him from those French poets of the latter part of the last century who recognized no values but esthetic values, and looked to "pure" art to free them from the trials of a human existence.

His poetry, also, seems to be related to that of the seekers after pure art. Its matter is as poetic as its form: he is in the bad sense of the term a poet's poet. His only theme, except in his poems of disgust and horror, is the struggle to create under the conditions imposed by a hostile intellectual and social environment. Death or damnation is equivalent to being a "man who suffers"; beatitude or the life eternal is the creation or contemplation of beauty. This of course is only one of many possible interpretations of Mr. Eliot's poetry, and it does not in the least explain it away, for the reason that it really is poetry, and measures up to those purely esthetic standards in the midst of which it was born. Yet are we not able to understand its limitations better in the light of a criticism which M. Maritain made of the poetry of Mallarmé and Rimbaud? "To command our art to be art in a pure state," he says, "by effectively freeing itself from all the conditions in the human subject, is to desire to usurp for it the aseity of God." And he goes on to describe the familiar results of this mistaken direction: "But thus by being itself it destroys itself, for it is on man,

in whom it subsists, and on things, by which it is fed, that its existence depends." That description fits so exactly the impression one gets from Mr. Eliot's verse as well as his prose, that one seems justified in concluding, even in the absence of any specific statement to that effect, that he does mean to separate esthetic from other values as radically as that.

M. Maritain is a Catholic, and criticizes from the Catholic point of view. But for our purposes, his important difference from Mr. Eliot lies in his recognition of the propriety of using ethical values in criticizing poetry. Like Mr. Irving Babbitt and M. Ramon Fernandez, and, indeed, the whole group that shares Mr. Eliot's esthetics, he sees in romanticism an ethical rather than an esthetic aberration. He says somewhere that modern literature has gone astray not so much because it has lost the conception of art as because it has lost the knowledge of art's proper place among the functions of the spirit. Are we then to say that Mr. Eliot does not recognize the relevance of ethical values to art at all? I should have said so, if Mr. Eliot had not taken pains to classify himself, in a recent review in the *New Criterion*, with the generation which accepts moral problems in contradistinction to the one which accepted only psychological or esthetic problems. This review is important for our purposes, because it defines Mr. Eliot's position with relation to that of M. Fernandez, who most definitely does see the bearing of morals on art, and to some extent to the work of Proust.

Proust is a particularly interesting example, because he, like Mr. Eliot to a lesser degree, is an outcome of 19th Century France, and because he like Mr. Eliot is undeniably an important artist according to esthetic criteria, whose work none the less fails to satisfy because of some taint of personalism. Only he has gone much farther in the direction which Mr. Eliot seems to have been taking, and, like a Wagnerian god beating a retreat to heaven, has forsaken our world for a realm all composed of those esthetically transmuted emotions and feelings which Mr. Eliot says make poetry. This realm shows no signs of an important part of the human equipment: the will.

It is on this lack that M. Fernandez bases his criticism. This means applying to art ethical standards. Now these standards involve two related conceptions: the conception of a human value, of the normal, adult, sane, fully-developed human being—a conception which he adapts from Freud (cf his *Note Sur Freud*)—and the conception of the free human spirit, which, only because of its freedom, has ethical significance. This is the spirit seized in the moment of action, judgement, decision, or creation, and is to be sharply distinguished from man considered as the subject of psychology, where the principle of life is necessarily omitted, and the subject analyzed into emotions and feelings. This distinction M. Fernandez takes great pains to establish in his essay, *L'Autobiographie et le Roman*. The importance of man the active being cannot be overemphasized, for it is only man so considered that has any significance for ethics, or religion, or art. It is this conception, as I remarked before, which assimilates the religious and humanistic thinkers whose esthetic standards are like Mr. Eliot's. And it is in the possession of this conception that they differ from him.

Mr. Eliot would not admit this statement, for he says in his review that he accepts moral problems. Yet in criticizing M. Fernandez, he reproaches him with trying to found a moral hierarchy on the frail basis of psychology. Now this objection may refer to the ideal of the fully developed human being, which I believe M. Fernandez did ultimately derive from Freud. It is not my intention to discuss the merits of this question here. In any case, M. Fernandez' second contribution, the *subject* of ethics, the active spirit, which is as necessary for the moral hierarchy as the ideal toward which it strives, remains unrealized by Mr. Eliot.

But even that statement of the case does Mr. Eliot less than justice. For does not his picture of the creative process involve just that notion? One of the ways the human spirit manifests itself is in creating, and this function Mr. Eliot understands. But this enables us at length to give a formula which I believe will clarify our whole perception of Mr. Eliot's work: he is aware of the creative spirit *only* in so far as it creates. That limitation debars him at once from

any sympathy with non-creative types. No wonder the only significant thing in the world for Mr. Eliot is art; no wonder his theme can only be the struggle to create, and that he presents the spectacle of a man doomed to sterility in the effort to make art out of art. So that we may at last say that the kernel of Mr. Eliot's position is his inability to see man the free being which is in all humanly significant figures.

Mr. Eliot is of course far too conscious not to have adopted some attitude toward what we have called his lack: he says in the review we are discussing that what he seeks is a non-human measure of value. But we have seen that both in the case of those who, like M. Fernandez, find their extra-human ideal in the existence of something that may be called transcendently human, and those who, like M. Maritain, find it in the form of a revealed religion, the free being is necessary to mediate between what we are and what we seek to become. So that if we remember that Mr. Eliot's only value is esthetic, we can see again how he knows this freedom only in the creative act. He would then differ from Proust, not in his having the esthetic discipline, for Proust was an artist too; nor in lacking the truly ethical consciousness, for he shares that lack with Proust—but in exaggerating the bearing of esthetic values, and trying to equate the esthetic with the properly ethical discipline.

We are thus in a position to understand better those ambiguities in his work which we have already mentioned in passing: of a romantic individualism in morals and a strict discipline in art; of a passionate faith and an equally passionate agnosticism, and of a profound comprehension of the creative act and an inability to escape the personal in his own poetry. We can also understand better the meaning of the *emigré*. By preferring a literary tradition to a human background he has limited himself to form, and his poetry while objective in form is necessarily personal in subject-matter. Deprived of any sympathetic connection with the world outside poetry, he can only mount to an ever narrower and less significant field of thought. Unless he chooses to return to his horror and disgust; but that is hardly a salvation. For the expression of a complete pessimism is

never very universal: "the race" has a way of living on in ironic silence in spite of its Jeremiahs.

But it is of course impossible to say, and I have no intention of pretending to do so, that this is the whole story of Mr. Eliot. His fine and sincere spirit continues to be violently active in its own sphere, and may yet find its way down to a broader level. In any case we may be sure that his work possesses the enduring though limited value which is the result of loyally following his own lights.

JANET LEWIS

MEADOW TURF

GOLDENROD, strawberry leaf, small bristling aster, all
Loosestrife, knifebladed grasses, lacing their roots, lacing
The life of the meadow into a deep embrace
Far underground, and all their shoots, wet at the base
With shining dew, dry-crested with sun,
Springing out of a mould years old;
Leaves, living and dead, whose stealing odors
On the cold bright air shed healing—
Oh, heart, here is your healing, here among
The fragrant living and dead!

JOHN DOS PASSOS

LINES TO A LADY

1.

Do you remember the little princess in Hans Andersen
whose brothers were enchanted into wild swans?
She sat in a graveyard among weirdwomen
and witches and twelve nights
gathered nettles under the moon.
O wild swan I have gathered nettles
tied them in bundles
carried them on my back
beaten the stinging fibre out of them
woven a burning shirt for you of nettles.
My hands are eaten with nettlefire.
Tonight sister
when comes the beating of wild swans' wings
there'll be a woman beside me in a burning shirt.

The nightingales are singing mad
above the tombs along the Appian way
stabbing the ears probing the dark
among the trees bitter trickling pain.

From somewhere across the empty lands
a whistle and the shuttling of trains.
The passengers rattle like beans
in the long pods of the sleepingcars
from Nowhere-in-the-Mountains dead asleep
hustled on to Nowhere-by-the-Sea.

Have you ever dreamed the dream
of falling
through green and violet and flaming zones
into pit blackness?

Tonight the nightingales have sprung the trap,
the lurch the fall through colored zones
of other summers, the smell of dust, wine spilt
on a green table, the moonlight dripping
from new vineleaves overhead, and a hound far away
baying, stormclouds toppling above the cracked mud of
the marsh,
the white rush of a squall that treads down the corn,
treetoads trilling and windows slammed in the house,
the sound of rain among the sycamores.

The train wails over the wide plains and the way of tombs.
In all this tumultous dark outside
the nightingales are singing mad.

2.

Some years summer comes too soon
spring flowers are scorched, the corn
stands yellow with shrivelled lower leaves,
The mockingbirds no longer sing
on fullmoon nights in the locustgrove.

The moon is a leper
who lies with the moon
remains in his core
forever a leper.

Evenings I sat on the stoop and stared down the dry lane
and down the lane came the sound of buggywheels
the breathless sound of someone arriving
who never came nearer.

July glittered in the wheatstubble and on the sickle beach.
She had red hair, the bathingsuit clung in ripples
to the bulb of her body. From the shanties down the beach
came gruff gusts of niggersmell
womensmell clung in the hot reek
of the wind off the marsh. Locusts, katydids

never let up the rasp and crackle
of their nightlong seesaw dances.
The moon was a naked woman sweaty
wiggling her belly above the groaning woods.

The moon is a leper
who lies with the moon
remains in his core
forever a leper.

The house was still smelt of coaloil,
there was rust on the doorknob.
Behind the door with her red hair tossed loose
she stood naked looking out at the moonlight.
The cornfield shrieked and hummed; thud of bullfrogs;
the lurch, the fall through green and violet
and flame into pitblackness . . .
and the pavements and the smell of asphalt and patchouli
the dollfaces and the clacking heels
through blue exhaust of taxicabs
the smell of furs and lipsticks
in tall cities reeling with twilight
behind the door for the turning of a rusty knob.

I chose the moon down the empty lane
the breathless sound of someone arriving
who never came nearer.

The moon is a leper
who lies with the moon
remains in his core
forever a leper.

3.

Above the sweeping mast
like breath on a windowpane
scud forms and fades.
The wind whines bagpipes in the shrouds
the deck against my ribs and face

risers and totters on broad seething waves
and I dream
that we lie in a bold brass bed
in a tall room brimmed with sun
where the wind brings pitch and the crying of gulls
and rivetters and the boom of sirens.
My ears shut to the harbor and the hustling feet
of sailors stooped under seabags
and the jingle of engineroom bells
and the sound and the smell of churned water,
when you throw the covers off
spread your proud thighs wide in the sun
and smile with closed eyes.

4.

When I closed the door on my love
sitting dim in the dusk of the cab
I caught her eyes in my eyes
held them climbing dizzily
the melting domes of sunset
I held my love in a last cloud
that flew like a wild swan over the roofs
till I saw the new moon giggling over Weehawken
walking alone through the sepulchre city
with the gust of a dead Sunday
blowing dust in my face.

5.

In a thousand years we might have learnt
not to unlove each other quite
but darling think
tomorrow we will both of us be dead.
Only your hair will live
I'll be all rotten but my glasses
and when the little worms the fat squirmy worms
have danced their hootchikootchy through our carcasses
the two of us will lie
grinning noseless at eternity.

We'll be pure enough then
 skeletons without desire
 and after centuries of continence
 (for even the pure must die)
 dust.

6.

I shall think of you as a young beechtree
 that stands in the sun at the clearing's edge
 with silversleek bark budding late.

(O to forget the tall palm at Delos
 the young palm that grew by the altar
 in the god's yard at Delos)

Silkskinned sapling with the long bright buds
 you shine through jangling thickets of today
 as through the murk of fingermarked years
 shines Olympianstriding grim
 implacable white Hera
 who also had heifer's eyes.

7.

It was gayer in the days of the grand dukes
 but you should come Saturdays or Sundays
 there's a jazzband then . . . and in her eyes the fine white
 ash

drove on a scorched wind sifted grey over the erect
 prancing Priapus and the rosy-rumped
 Venus in the bar on Carmine Street.

One of the girls here taught me Canfield
 she's a hot sketch, but I doan have no luck
 I was my mother's thirteenth child
 Honest I could love a man of my own
 Great Jesus how I could love him. What can you do
 so many in one night . . . At Pompeii they found them
 for all night choked in fine white ash
 turned to grey stone that crumbles.

8.

The shining fireengine spring
cries with a voice of brass
down the shattering street
shakes down the ruddy sky
in confetti about our faces;
we walk with the backs of our hands touching
together like in a canoe.

These are the mountain gates where the gibbons wail
all night above the flooded river.

There's a red cascade of sunlight on the stairs
a hand fumbles for the key
we are alone . . . straining shoulders at the paddles
above us cliff after spraylistening cliff
soar the roaring rock walls of the gorge.
Foamwhite ivoryslender with armpits of musk
you stand among heaped petals.
Adam leaned breathing her over the first woman
took his lips from the gold small curls of her neck
raised her from drooping till she bent
backwards tight against his arms.

This darkness this terror shrilling
in our driven flesh between these yelling cliffs
under the gnashing of these waves
the aching lurch up into sudden tussling quiet
and one voice singing fast
higher fast as the bloodbeat;
limp without strength we slice
green mirroring water
between jonquil meadows
hemmed by steep pastures of delight.

These are the mountain gates where the gibbons wail
all night above the flooded river.

The first day of spring the worm
comes to the surface of the ground
and sings all night in a shrill soprano voice.

*Ashes to ashes
and dust to dust
I ain't got no sweetie
but tomorrow I must*

The phonographs are singing in the tombs
in Cambridge on the Appian Way

*Do I get it now
or must I hesitate*

Fordowners on the Nomeni Pike
sit on their stoops in the moonlight
listening for the whine of a Mercedes
that never comes nearer.

*The browner the berry
the sweeter the juice
I want a colored lady
for my personal use*

Neosalvarsan three times a day
shot intra venos by Dr. Fernandez
will bring the moon through to a negative test
and the Reverend Campbell (call Columbus eight two
hundred)

offers for one hundred and fifty iron men
a modest funeral including a dress suit.

*Do I get it now
or must I hesitate. . .*

Spring crying greens with a voice of brass
brings the brick streets about our ears,
through shantytown we walk together
picking nettles on the hills of spices,
hands touching thighs touching and then your eyes
were lost when I turned to them;
it was night without moon or stars,
I was alone among tracks and blinding lights
in a jagged country strange to me.

HANIEL LONG

A PITTSBURGHER EN ROUTE

NEW MEXICO

1.

Cochiti: The Sacred Dances

THE gathering storm sent lines of mist along the tiers of hills behind the *pueblo*, and turned them into hills of fairy-land; it built above their summits a mountain range of white clouds, retiring into depthless mist and space. Above the white range it built a black range, the highest peaks of which leaned out dizzily over our heads toward the zenith and were veined with fire. Against those three ranges I saw the brown adobe houses of the Indians, and the plaza with its three ragged tamarasks. And when the torrents fell, the centre of that dusty plaza became a pond.

The Cochitiñeros were dancing for rain. I saw the *koshare*, the black and white paint washed off their bare limbs, wading in living water in the plaza, drinking it in handfuls, scooping it up and throwing it on the lines of dancers. One fell and cut his hip, and the blood ran down his thigh in a stream; but he was unaware of it. The abundant answer to their prayers filled these old men, who represent the ancestors of the village, I am told, and are supposedly invisible, with an astonishing fervor. One of them danced among the others with marvellous gestures of gratitude and humility, of promise and remembrance. In that hour he embodied the spirit of a people who had lived long and who hoped to live longer, by maintaining amity with the spirits which surround human life.

That *koshare* is a living frieze in my mind. He multiplies himself into incomparable figures against the green of river trees, against sheet lightning on the hills.

2.

Cochiti: The Profane Dances

With the kindly tolerance of the Indians, young men both American and Spanish-American, from neighboring ranches and villages, have opened two dance-halls on the outskirts of the *pueblo*. For this is a real fiesta, and includes the neighbors. I force my way into the small stuffy rooms, half-deafened by jazz, to see this dancing, too. Thin blond boys, thin dark boys, with tremendous hats and a cigarette in the corner of the mouth, clasp tight their lithe brunettes and go round in a mad vortex.

It is a different dance from that now being gravely celebrated in the open plaza to propitiate the forces of health and growth. It is brought into being by a civilisation less sure of the purposes of life.

3.

San Juan: The Penitentes

The Easter moon changed the mesa to the white of desert sand, and as we sped along we saw far away the ghostly snow-caps of the Jemez range. It was odd to drive through the deserted *pueblo* of San Juan, over the Rio Grande, up a valley past darkened houses with not a sound from the dogs or the stock in the corrals. Was the world deserted? The night grew ominous.

Suddenly, a band of youths in black masks marched out of nowhere straight across the road in front of us, and into a house at our right, there to strip themselves and become flagellants. A flute sounded three times. A band of masked men approached us, singing the hymn of the cult: one of those men would be crucified a week from to-night.

Why do these humble souls, here in the terror of the dark, bare their flesh to the scourge of cactus? And every year on Good Friday crucify one of their brothers? That their souls may be saved, that the world may be better,

I suppose; but my heart is hurting me. Perhaps I am thinking of a naked and glorious festival in which the Greeks celebrated the oneness of man and of nature, and Apollo crowned his boy-priests with laurel. Or perhaps, I am remembering a dance last summer in that Indian town across the Rio Grande, in which men and women, boys and girls, offered their sunlit bodies as a prayer to the Eternal.

4.

Cienega

To speak of Cienega is to remember a road winding down from an arid mesa into a valley where drought cannot follow. In a moment walls of blue rock rise beside the road, a singing *acequia* crosses and recrosses it, and red fields appear. The fields are divided into squares by little dykes of mud, and *acequias* lined with willows water them all. Perhaps it is in these willows that the meadow-larks sing. Cienega is a valley of meadow-larks. And on the road we pass shy dark boys, one after another, riding bareback; the only kind of boys for a valley so filled with song.

The orchards are in flower. And now we reach the incredible red houses of Cienega, which lift themselves out of the red earth they are made of, into orchards of misty white. Low red walls surround them; in their neat *patios* stands a cottonwood or a locust. Immaculate *patios* and houses!

I see it all again; and yet, can these houses be so red? And the dogs the children play with, can they be so white? And the Cerrillos hills seen through an *arroyo* leading skyward, can they be so blue? Perhaps Cienega is an enchantment. And when one goes to it between the walls of blue rock, one may really not be going to it at all, but rather dreaming a dream he has dreamt before. Surely no one can be certain he has visited Cienega; people say to themselves, do they not:

"Was it a vision; or have I, some time or other, seen dusk in a valley like this?"

5.

Santa Fe: The Sandstorm

The wind roared from the south the other day, yellow with dust. It hid the mountains, even the foot-hills. Sand streamed in under the window sashes, and eddied in spirals in the yard outside. Its grit was in my mouth; I could feel it in my armpits, between my legs, in my shoes.

The storm tried the nerves of everybody. Santa Fe waited irritably for it to pass. It drove through the glass sides of the greenhouse, and every grain of sand which lighted on the white petal of an Easter lily burned it and marred it.

I went to see a man who was dying. The sky above his house was changing from mud color to an ominous saffron. The shutters of his sleeping porch strained and rattled at their cords. He lay there with his devoured bones and ruptured bowels, and with an optimism born of morphine, told me he would soon be himself again.

Only you, my dear, were wise. For you, of all the town, grew weary of withstanding the torment; you stole out to a place where foot-hill and mesa meet, and stayed there, giving yourself up to the violence, relaxing your personal consciousness. It ceased to be a storm, you told me; it became a different thing, a moment of overwhelming music, which absorbed you.

My mind is full of death, my flesh is rasped by sand. Yet I believe it is possible for us to reconcile ourselves with all storms, even with those which torture and stun us. I believe that each of us can find a place like the one you found, though that one happened to be outdoors, where we may relax and lose our horror, and by yielding become part of giant rhythms that might otherwise destroy us.

6.

Santa Fe: Trees in Flower

Spring comes so fast that I can think of little else. This new green in the willow, the maple, the currant-bush, reminds me of my first sight of the plaza of Santo Domingo that hot afternoon we saw the corn-planting dance. The turquoise *tablitas* on the heads of the women, the turquoise arm-bands on the young men, cooled one like a spring in the desert. Against the walls of brown earth, which always appear to me insubstantial in the sunlight and as though about to vanish and leave only a sound of singing, this turquoise was real as eternity.

So is the pale green of first spring, over the landscape to-day. And the cerise of peach blossoms at the base of a cliff of cottonwoods, or close to an adobe dwelling, or through other trees, is like the Indian women in their gay scarfs, who watch from their portals the turquoise rippling like water in the plaza before them. And the white pyramids of pear trees, the massed cloudy white of cherries, are like that solitary Indian in a white sheet, who stood immovable on a brown roof, with far away mountains behind him.

7.

Santa Fe

Santa Fe sometimes makes me think of Ivry. It was at Ivry that Caesar overtook the peace-loving Divico and fought that inconclusive engagement with the Helvetians which was more important to him than his victories. For it was as a result of it, and the grandiose accounts of it he sent south (as an electioneering manoeuvre, says Ferrero), and his daring in announcing the annexation of Gaul on the strength of it, that Rome was doomed to spend her vitality in the north, crushing the resistance of the Gallic chieftains, obliterating the old Celtic life, so that hardly a trace has come down to us of its traditions and habits of thought.

Santa Fe, like Ivry, is the scene of a battle to-day between the primitive and the civilised world. It is a battle with a long front, but Santa Fe is its centre. For here the Indians, as they retreat before materialism, are making converts in the ranks of their enemies to the poetry and vitality of primitive life. The proselytizing is furthered by the ethnologists, by writers who popularise the literal renderings of song and story done by the scientists, by poets and painters interested in the archaic city-republics which line the Rio Grande. As a nation, we are being influenced by this passionate attention, and in consequence we are adding to other moods something of the mood and culture of the primitive. In a degree, we are turning Indian. And to-day more than in the time of Caesar, civilisation is open to the solicitings of that mood, because many of the paths our age has wandered into begin to appear like blind alleys.

If Ivry is the place where Caesar began the conquest of the aborigines, Santa Fe may be the place where the aborigines are beginning the conquest of Caesar.

8.

Turning Indian

There are moods in which political man is too horrible to think about, and moral man and artistic and scientific man likewise. Our thoughts turn to simple natural man, as we imagine him to be, the earth-child; and beyond him, to earth itself, to the great landscapes.

See America first! We leave our piled cities; we go off to the mountains, trout-fishing. We go hiking in valleys that never sickened at the smell of gasoline, sleeping at night where the pine-roots fork into the soil, waking at dawn with unwonted thoughts. We swim naked in sunlit lakes, and leap on our horses and ride them in, also. Or else, held by tasks there is no escape from, we stay at home; but if a leisure moment comes, we fall to dreaming or reading of the outdoors. In any case, we are fraternising outside of the realm of man.

We want life to be beautiful from the root, as men in all ages have really wanted it to be. We are tired of being strangers in our own landscape. Is it any wonder that we begin to take seriously those primitive interpreters of our land, the Indians; that like Thoreau and Whitman, we long to feel a wind upon our cheeks "blowing from the Indian's heaven?"

MEXICO

1.

Somewhere in Mexico

It is one of those places in the middle of nowhere where trains stop, to meditate on the vanity of their eternal going. From the last vestibule I see between me and the bare brown hills a little field of sage brush. A few shanties are lost in the sage; and a young woman with a brown *rebozo* about her head comes from one of them to the track. I suspect that she wants money, but I am wrong. She wants books, magazines, papers; and she makes a despairing gesture at the desolate scene about her. We have been strewing the roadway for miles with an accumulated mass of magazines, and I have nothing left to give her but the daily paper from Mexico City. The train begins to move. She sinks back into that group of lonely people, sheep-herders, coastguards, telegraphers, and their families, out in the wilds, lost to their kind, whom the world they serve knows so little about.

2.

Escoba: The Ruined Factory

The cotton factory at Escoba must have been a handsome building in its day, for the white façade still has an unaccountable strange dignity, like that of a venerable college hall. The roof has fallen in, and at the doorway a

tree in flower bars one's entrance. In the ruined chapel, for the factory plantation had its private chapel, trees and shrubs are now clustering about the altar, under the vault of the blue sky, surrounded by walls of a faint Pompeian red. In the master's garden, across the deeply rutted roadway, the fountains are dismantled, and the trees—rubber, coffee, guava, eucalyptus, ash—have become a jungle through which runs a triumphant vine of the white rose. The master's mansion is inhabited by bats.

The tinted and symmetrical dwellings of the workers, which stretch from the chapel to the factory about a large quadrangle, are like the cells of a vast monastery. Indeed, something of a Chartreuse lingers in the silence and desertion of the spot; it makes me wonder whether an industry might have come upon the earth in this out of the way corner of Mexico, capable of inspiring its workmen with a true devotion. But if it had, could it have vanished again?

3.

Chapala

Chapala is a beautiful village, with environs of flower and cloud. Walking among its tinted dwellings, I find myself inquiring what makes the chief beauty of a town. Some say the dawns and the sunsets, above all when the town, like Chapala, sits by a lake and under a mountain. Some say the reflection in the water of far away storm clouds, because at such a sight the mind lifts its own colored Golcondas. Others say other things, speaking of wealth and industry, churches and museums, cafes and theatres.

It occurs to me that the chief beauty of a town may be the eyes and the lips that smile. At sight of smiling faces the mind knows a joy unlike any other, and a Golconda which is no illusion rises in one's thoughts. The smile is the wildfire of life; it makes human beings beautiful, and smokestacks, and rainy evenings, and the house across the street. People who don't smile enough are not human enough; at least, so one thinks in Chapala, a town where this wildfire runs free.

4.

Chapala: The Canoas

The sunset was a large square window of red light in a black wall of cloud and mountain. We stood on the wide sandy beach, and watched a junk from Tuscueca across the lake furl sail and come to anchor. The boatmen swung its stern to the shore with a strong hawser of twisted grass. They rolled up their *calecones* and began carrying their women ashore, and then the bales of merchandise.

I thought of Pittsburgh, and I wished idly that we Pittsburghers might have such brown legs as these Mexican Indians, and come on junks from a sunset place over a lake, and carry our women ashore on our shoulders. But what I truly wished for, and could not think too wild to wish for, was that we too might somehow bring to Sunday market the things we had made during the week, each of us feeling that he was contributing to the life of all, helping to create it, allowed to live it.

5.

Xochtlycacan

Xochtlycacan is not a town I have visited, but a fabulous Aztec place of which I dream, "the place where flowers are lifted." In the state of Jalisco one cannot help thinking a great deal about flowers, and birds, and jewels, and children. Perhaps that is why the ancient Aztec poems are full of them. Perhaps that is why the Nahuatl tongue has so many verbs for mingling. One cannot help thinking a great deal about that mother of the Aztec gods whom the great Rivera celebrates in his decorations in Mexico City, that goddess who "shone in the thorn-bush like a bright butterfly" and was "an ever-fresh model of liberality towards all flesh."¹

The Aztec poet confesses that he arranged his stanzas

¹ Tr. of Brinton.

like the lovely feathers of the oriole, that he polished his song like an emerald, hoping it would sound like golden bells tinkling. The Aztec youth went forth to battle with the plumage of bright birds round his loins. And the villages of Jalisco lift their flowers still; but to me their loveliest flowers are los niños, the children.

6.

The Golden Arroyo

The air was warm and pine-scented in the red valley with its crystal stream, and from the heated soil came a good aroma. On our right rose a bastion of red quartz, waist-high; a pine arched above us, and to our left stood dwarf cedars. The sun burned our bodies, even though snowflakes from dark clouds over the mountain fluttered down now and then.

It was good to mingle in that quiet place, where the freezing wind of the mesa could not come; to sink into the reality of that valley, where all coincides and is integral; to feel how nothing is for its own sake, not stream, not tree, not rock, nor man's spirit and body.

7.

Chapala: On the Beach

A naked little boy who is drying off on the beach confides in me about his father. From what I can make out, the people call his father crazy. The little boy feels badly, he cries while he talks. It seems that his father picks up rocks from the streets, and says they are gold; the little boy sees no craziness in that. If his father likes to do so, why shouldn't he? And I echo, why shouldn't he? Should not the neighbors rejoice that someone finds the streets of the town paved with gold? Or is Chapala, for all its smiles, one of those literal towns, like Pittsburgh and New York?

And now evening has come to the beach; and Garifo, the dark-skinned boat-boy, is singing *Mi viejo amor* while the sun sets. I lift my eyes from the green beetle and the red ants on the sand at my feet, and watch the mountains drift along the water wreathed in his song. I watch a rainbow on a far away desert shore, watch that shore catch the last light, become suddenly Chinese-red, fade as suddenly into grey. Let Garifo mean what he will, I am glad that the earth is my old love, my one love.

8.

En route to Havana (On the train from Mexico City)

After the drop into the tropical jungle from the cool heights of Orizaba, suddenly the track went over a deep *barranca*, and looking straight down I saw on the stony ledges by the stream a white man stript and poised to dive, his clothes and sombrero lying on the rock beside him, his Mexican attendants and three saddle horses close by. . . . Vera Cruz . . . There was an armadillo and a green parrot on the wharf . . . and a marvellous *cargador*, stript to the waist, with a red bandana round the neck, burnt almost black, a bottle of *tequila* in each trouser pocket, salt and limes somewhere else, so that he might frequently perform as bartender to himself and his friends; always singing, yelling, leaping . . . beautiful, spendthrift life, eaten up by sunshine and animal spirits, perhaps to be gone to-morrow . . . Progreso . . . the town is a strip on the horizon six miles away, a flat exposed strip, as though it were a spit in the sea. In the jungles a day's ride to the interior are the ruins of Yucatan. I stood a long time by the rail, gazing at the great sharks in the indigo water . . . those sharks Valle-Inclan speaks of in the *Sonata de Estío*, that strange Yucatan he speaks of; I am in as mad and fevered and cruel a mood as the book itself. . . . I love the boat-ride . . . it is a continual Turkish bath, in this warm Gulf. The people aboard I notice most are the Purser, who is worrying about some-

thing and refusing food; the Vanilla Bean, a tall agreeable man who deals in flavours, and who takes turns with me playing the phonograph to the purser when the latter stays abed; a tall young dancer, very mettlesome in the current manner, who had been put in charge of the Captain for safe return to the States, and whom the captain put in charge of the Vanilla Bean at Havana, against the Vanilla Bean's will, thereby causing the purser, the Vanilla Bean, a young American matron, and me, a good deal of trouble on a trip we took to Morro Castle, where this girl got a Cuban major on the string, and danced with him in the Officers' Club, and then took to disappearing with him and reappearing in distant portions of the fortifications until the Vanilla Bean's hair turned a shade greyer for fear he couldn't restore the American orchid to the captain in her unsullied orchidaceous state, or at all. The Vanilla Bean and I grew dizzy with the full July sun, and I almost fainted, and the young matron, though red as a lobster, held out nobly and supported the purser, and collected the orchid, and we all got back to the city about sunset . . . And another passenger, a Mexican lady of giant weight and gravity, who shaved her chin and upper lip, and who wore stockings brighter and brighter as she grew more sea-sick, so that she made me think of a dying dolphin . . . And an elderly Spaniard, who talked to me about Carranza . . . and took me to the Jardin Tropical in Havana, to see the monument to the founder of the brewery, and the temple of Vesta where beer is served gratis, and the temples, fountains, dancing pavilions of blue and white tile, among the palms, and who stayed close to my ear all the time, telling me how Carranza persecuted the Catholics. . . .

YVOR WINTERS

FIRE SEQUENCE

Strike ye our land with curved horns—*Frances
Densmore, from the Chippewa Buffalo Song*

1. COAL: BEGINNING AND END

Below the pressure
of the years
what is this
bring it warmth
the writhing heat
without a roothold
yet drives
downward
atom after atom
bounds away

they go

a milky way of spermy slow
explosions over night

2. LIBERATION

My room is bare
come in you
freed from death
now twisting a
slow course in Time
speak to me here
before Time grips us
death is
long—no man may

come to free us—
then your lips
your thighs that seethe interminably.
So evade the years.

3. RETURN OF SPRING

Spring. The drifting men. The valleys fill.
Gasoline lamps in spring nights—the dances
dripping blood.

The rails beside the station platform are a
watery green. No matter where one turns the
world is difficult to remember. The ticking
from the station starts intermittently.

This only I can never forget: the shrieking
steel amid the wilderness of spring.

I am living in a frame house, empty, gaunt as
an October night, and I am standing in the door.
The dawn clings to the river like a fog. It rises.
I am cold.

Below me are the dried shacks, painted blue,
against electric lights, between the hills. As
cold as a whore's fingers stiff at dawn. Or like
the stones lost in the valley.

4. BILL

Come sit here let's
get a room I'm
drunk we got a
room the girl's gone
home

damn town I
could have killed them

but them four guys
jumped on top of
me with hobnails
caulked their boots to
get the floor they
got my head

the
monkey chased their
mother and the monkey
won

but christ
if I was big as
you I'd lick the
world you must be
sweet as hell

look out the window
them damn goats
that sister
sitting down to pee

good kid she was
god! give me air

5. THE VANQUISHED

Alert and bitter in
this blackened time
this light of autumn
streaked with early
winter

I go up the steps
the yellow window
smears black earth
with gold

damned in the heavy
 wind smoke earthy
 night the house weaves to the
 sailing cry black nigger
 monkeyface I'll knock you
 dead damn I'm as
 good as you sunk
 toward me in the dark his
 breath was steam
 I'll —— the dirty Slav to death

stiff ruts lay black and heavy
 Christ lay
 drunk among them in a
 gulley stones were white in dark He
 shuddered into sleep.

6. THE VICTOR

The Slav stood in the
 door the green light hung a
 mist amid his black hair
 forehead shadowed like the hills
 above the valley

the blue hills
 the nightfilled
 whorl and stone
 an element
 of some profound
 of thought

the hills
 in this existence
 are an image
 for the drowned

can't find my way
 the earth is shallow
 and I stumble

grasses whip in night
the air like ether
and their blades but names

7. A MINER

Dust unto dust and
bone unto the rock
you split the rock it
closed—your brain
flashed out in smoke

now let the granite
press you into
coal black rich
with heat

you
warm my heart
great Slav who
stamped and roared
through winter nights
on fragile floors

no plank was made
for you alive or dead
but rock!

The wind
shakes rivetted
to earth as if you
set your great feet
slowly to its roar

8. VACANT LOT

Tough hair like dead
grass over new and
hooves quick and

impatient the he-goat
looks round him
over frozen mud

but
finds no mate

hardeyed
and savage he
turns back and nips
the bitter grass.

9. TRAGIC LOVE

I

The girl went out
and died amid a
cold that clung
like flame.

The God
was gone, but he
came back amid
great splendor
and great heat
and leaves like shells
broke from the
earth and rang in
the thin air
about her black thighs
where no God had been
peering for this
stiff beauty under
cold invisible and
visible—periphery
of air and
globe of winter.

II

Then between her thighs
the seeded grass
of airy summer—
the slow hairlike flame.

10. TO THE CRUCIFIED

Alone you fire on
wood cling to the
surface twine about
the cross

it is broad day
the fire is
small and hard and
far away you
are too small

by night you
shrink and gather
and lick into black
I read my paper
by your glare

three nights in hell
you flame of solid gold
rolled over all the surface
lifted atom
after atom

and burst through all Space

but left this fine
incredible and slowly
rushing wake of sound.

11. O SUN!

O Sun who make
the earth sweat
shadowy and acid
life for whom the
black pines grip
and tear the living
rock

strike
through my body
now I walk alone
to try the depth of earth

red carrots tremble
in a rigid shoal, and
man leaps out
creator of bent Power
blackthrobbing blasphemies

in guts of iron
he mixes stone and
air bricks climb
the trellises of light

great cabbages
roll from the dark
and break choked
black with life

12. INCANDESCENT EARTH

Hills red and brown
and matted
springy with scruboak
the dust and sagesmell
heat

a stifling cloud
rose at the touch
leaves fell to ash

more heat beat from
the earth
than from the sun the
rock
was hot all night

the coral snakes
flowed
rolling over smoking rock
in sluggish agony
in search of sleep

13. ORANGE TREE

Hard oily
sinuous
your trunk

black serpent
struggling
with your weight of gold

great strength
massed
against Time

in angry pride
you hold out
lacquered life

the classic leaf

14. NOVEMBER

The season roaring
low along the ground
piles up in heavy
swells on throbbing timbers
breaks, a crest of
sound, electric foam that
runs upon the air

on black root tortured
fields cut into by
white rock

the house
the shaken wood
hardrooted in the
cold waits I am strong

come to my room
the stove is iron
I took the hot
dark from the earth
to wrap about you

your grave body
growing in the heart of
wood while the black
season beats the timbers
with its heavy cries

15. GENESIS

Locked drab and sudden
underfoot the earth is
fierce in silence
forces without Time or

Space have snapped
together and the thing
is wintergray and hard
and without love or change

one gave and I was born
I the slow difference
increase and shrink
and now shall vanish

here and there
a flower is oozing agony
torn between earth and
light: thin flower of Force
it wrinkles gathers bends

no shoulders break this
crystallized electric hatred
bitter with no sense
it is a dream
locked into Time
a dream that bent my brain
that slow vibration
singing out of sound

16. THE BITTER MOON

Dry snow runs burning
on the ground like fire—
the quick of Hell spin on
the wind. Should I believe
in this your body, take it
at its word? I have believed
in nothing. Earth burns with a
shadow that has held my
flesh; the eye is a shadow
that consumes the mind

Scream into air. The voices
 of the dead still vibrate—
 they will find them, threading
 all the past with twinging
 wires alive like hair in cold.
 These are the nerves
 of death. I am its brain.

You are the way, the oath
 I take. I hold to this—
 I, bent and thwarted by a will
 to live among the living dead
 instead of the dead living; I,
 become a voice to sound for.
 Can you feel through Space,
 imagine beyond Time?

The

snow alive with moonlight
 licks about my ankles.
 Can you find this end?

17. THE DEEP: A SERVICE FOR ALL THE DEAD

Old concentrate of thought, ironveined and slow,
 that willed itself and labored out of earth,
 man grinds his plow through corrugated rock
 and draws a wake that lasts a thousand years:
 it thins and gathers, creeps up to the spot
 where the brain vanished.

Vanished in concentration,

shrank till he could not stir—
 a thought worn small with use, a formula,
 a motion, then a stasis, and then nothing.
 And in the bent heart of the seething rock
 slow crystals shiver, the fine cry of Time.

ERIC WALROND

CITY LOVE

From a gulf in the dark low sea of rooftops there came mounting skyward the fiery reflexes of some gaudy Convention Night on Lenox Avenue. With the fate of a sinning angel the eye went *carombolling* 'cross the fizzing of a street lamp, caught the rickety vision of a bus, topheavy with a lot of fat, fanning Jews, tottering by on the cloudy August asphalt; flitted from the moon-shingled edges of elm and oak, onward, finally settling on the dark murmuring folk enlivening the park's green dusk rim.

"Quit that, honey!" warned the girl, softly. "I's skeert o' dirt, baby, don't you do that." She steered the lad's menacing hand out the way.

"No tellin' whieh some o' dat grabble might go," continued Nicey, making a pirate's cross bones of her legs.

A silence, dramatic to St. Louis, ensued. He was hurt, put out, ashamed of himself at Nicey's gently unanswerable rebuke.

He risked a pair of greedy, sun-red eyes round at her, and his courage took fresh impetus. "I know a place," he bristled suddenly with conviction, and Nicey's head turned involuntarily. "An' here Ah wuz—" he chuckled self-condemningly. "Come on, le's chance it."

"A nice place?" Nicey asked, quietly, not wishing to seem eager.

"Ah mean!" breathed Primus with deep-felt ardor.

"Yo' talk like yo' know it, like yo' done bin they orready," was what she was on the verge of saying, but large immediate interests possessed her, and she said instead, half-coyly, "No kiddin' now!"

"Honest," he said, getting up, "I ain't foolin'. I ain't green as I look. I bin there——"

"Oh yeah?" risked Nicey with surgical placidity.

"I mean," he stammered, admitting the error, but she

checked the ripening flow of advances, and stood up. "That'll do," she said sagely, and walked, hips swinging, on down the hill in front of him.

He kept a little ways behind, feeling insecure and moody at his silly measure of self-puffing.

A flower coursed by, and she caught it, pressing the white dewy petals to her mouth. Dissatisfied, she flung it in a curdle of nettles. "Ah likes flowers dat got pa'fune," she said, "dis one ain't got a bit o' smell."

As they sped out on the flaky stone flight of steps leading toward St. Nicholas, clots of lovers, in twos and more than twos, leaned against the bowing foliage, forcing the dicks, bronze and pale-faced ones, to take refuge upon their fobs and palms behind the dark viny hedge.

A big muddy touring car filled with a lot of drinking Bolita Negroes skidded recklessly by into the gulch to One Hundred Thirty-Fifth Street. Pebbly dust bombarded the lids of Nicey's and Primus' eyes.

". . . fur to go, baby?"

"Thutty fo'th . . . not fur . . . come . . . look out . . . you'll get run ovah, too."

A shanty, lodged beside an aerial railway track, with switches and cross ties, hovered dark and low above the street. A mob of Negroes passing underneath it hurried on as the trains rushed by, the lusty pressure chipping dust and rust off the girders.

Cars lurched in and out of side streets, assuming and unloading cargoes of vari-hued browns and blacks of conflicting shades of ebony splendor.

"How much furrer we got to go, honey," cried Nicey, dusty, eager, ill-at-ease.

"Not fur, honey, here we's at——"

They stopt before a brown stone dwelling. In the thickening night-light they glimpsed a fat butter-yellow Negress lolling in a rocker on the stoop and fanning herself with the long end of her apron.

There they stood, naked of pleats and tucks, frills and laces . . . orphans.

"Go on down t' the basement," the woman directed, with a wave of her heavy hand.

"You'd better wait here, Nicey," Primus said, with a show of manly vigor. Skipping to the basement the smells of a Negro cook shop came somersaulting at him. His senses were placid beside the sickening essences of corn and pork and candied yams.

The man who shared in this riotous obscenity was spotted by a kerosene torch swaying from a hook nailed in the wall. He was bald and tall and huge and spade black. He wore a shirt and flabby blue jeans and braces. Under such a low ceiling his fading oak skull threatened to violate the plumb-ing. In such a tiny passageway he seemed with his thick rotund figure to be as squat as an inflated bull frog.

He turned, at the shadow absorbing a length of the trembling light, and there was hair on both sides of his broad black face. He looked into Primus' eyes and a mist of mutuality sprang between them.

"Wha' yo' wife at?" he muttered in a whining Southern voice.

"I'll call 'er——"

"No, yo' don't hav' to call her," he assured him. "She outside?"

"Yeah."

"That's orright."

"Any bags?" he plied further, eyeing St. Louis closely. "Wha' yo' bags at? Outside, too? Don't le' 'em stay dere. Bring 'em on down in yah."

"Bags?" cried Primus, quickly, "I ain't got no bags. Wha' kind o' bags?" He hung on eagerly for the rest.

"Ain't yo' know," the man said, with that faculty for understatement which seems to be the pride of Negroes of the late plantation class, "that yo can't register at no hotel without bags? Go git yo'self a armful o' bags!"

He fled, breathless, to the girl on the pavement.

"Well!" Nicey said, both hands on her spreading hips.

He was excited and hurt, and he stuttered. "They—he—won't take us like this. I mean—we got to git weself some bags—bags—bags—"

Nicey sighed, a plaintive sigh of relief—a sigh that was a monumental perplexity to him. "Don't look at me like that!" he swore, angry at his ineffectuality. "I did my

darndest to git 'im to take us, but he won't do it. Says it's 'gainst the law."

"What yo' gwine do now?" she cut in, distrustful of self-defenses.

"Git me a bag, that's all! Ain't nothin' else to do. C'm awn!"

2.

In the resistless languor of the summer evening the Negroes wandered restively over the tar-daubed roofs, squatted negligeed on shelterless window sills, carried on connubial pantomimic chatter across the circumscribed courts, swarmed, six to a square inch, upon curb and step, blasphemously jesting.

"I'll run up," he said, pausing before the portals of a greasy tower of flats. "You wait here, baby, I ain' gwine b' long."

And he cut a slanting passage through the mob, leaped up half a dozen crumbling steps, through a long narrow corridor, ending, blowing, before a knob on the sixth floor.

He rattled a key in the lock, and entered. A strip of oil-cloth, dimly silvery in the shadowy interior, flashed at him. He put the strip behind him, flicked on the lights, and stared in Son Son's big starry eyes. The child was the browning purple of star apple and was gorgeously animated. He was strapped in a ram-upholstered chair cocked against the window opening out upon a canyon of street. He jiggled at Primus a plumed African Knight of a doll.

The doll, profuse with bells and spangled half-discs, tinkled annoyingly. "Less noise, sah!" shouted Primus, descending on all fours and industriously examining the debris piled under the davenport which separated the cluttered room in two. Dimples of satanic delight brightened the child's face. He jiggled his toy, wagged his legs, carolling. He puffed his cheeks and boomed, scattering mouth-mist about.

"Ain't I tell you to less noise, yo' lil' water mout' imp yo'," cried St. Louis, flying up, seizing and confiscating the tas-

seled ebony knight and slapping the kid's dusk-down wrists. "Ain't I tell yo' not to botha' yo' pappy when 'e come 'ome, to less yo' noise?" The youngster's sudden recourse to imperturbability annoyed him. "Yo' ain't gwine cry no? Well, tek dat, an' dat, an' dat! Cry, Uh say, Cry! Yo' won't open yo' mout', no, yo' won't buss loose, yo'——"

A pair of claws fell viciously on Primus' back, and, combined with the soaring quality of Tiny's voice, served to wheel him aboutface with a swift downing jolt.

He had forgotten, alas! to push the bath room door when he came in.

"Look yah, man, wha' de hell yo' tink yo' his, hennyhow? Yo' tink yo' dey down in de Back Swamp whey yo' come from, wha' dem don' know nutton but fi' beat up people? Hey, dis yah sinting yo' Ah see 'tan' up yah, 'im tink 'im his back in Lucy a prog bout fi' yampies an' hunions in de picknee head. Come tumpin' de po' picknee roun' like him hone him!"

A fit of conquering rage narrowed and hardened and glistened Tiny's small, tight, mole-flecked face.

From the piano she flew to Son Son's side. The child was bashful, and in a dazed, defensive mood. "Hit dis yah picknee a next time 'n see if me don' cahl a policeman fi' yo' hay. Hey, yo' na'h ashame' o' yo'self, no, fi' come down pon' a puny liggle picknee like dis 'n a show arf yo' strengt'? Why yo' didn't knock de man de oddah day when 'im bruk 'im wheel barrow 'cross yo' neck back 'pon de wharf? Why yo' didn't ram yo' hook in 'im gizzard, yo' dutty old cowrd yo', yo' can't fight yo' match, but yo' must wait till yo' get 'ome an' tek it out pon' me po' boy picknee."

He was on his knees, ransacking the amassing litter.

"Yo' a prowl 'bout now," Tiny went on, hugging Son Son to her bosom, "like a cock sparrow, but go 'long. Me na'h say nutton to yo', me jes' ah wait till de cole weddah come roun' again. An', boy, me will see yo' faht blue hiccuss befor' yo' get anyt'ing from me to shub in yo' stinkin' guts! The day yo' say yo' got de back ache, an de foot ache, an' de turrah ache, don't le' me hear yo' wit' me name 'pon yo' mout', yo' hear? Fo' if yo' tink yo' gwine get me fo' go

out fi' scrub me finger nail dem white fi' cram bittle down a neygah man troat like yo', yo' is lie! Yo' bes' mek up yo' mine now it warm 'n get yo'self a helevator job fo' when de winter come. Fo' so 'elp me Gawd me will see yo' in holy hell fuss befo' yo' a see me trudge hup an' down dem yah stair' like I is any whore fi' do as yo' dam well please."

"Oh, woman," he chuckled, unconcernedly, "tun yo'self out o' me way, yo' smell bad." He banged the door after him, a frayed straw valise under his arm.

3.

He espied her, not leaning toward the frog-tinged moon rising out the river, against the red-spotted rods barricading the way to the cellar, where he had left her; but standing facing him, a speck in the dusk, on the opposing piazza, in an arrow of shadow in the court. He crossed the street, and was inside the marbled sink.

Nicey detached herself from the wall and waved a red, exacting mouth before his tense, sweating face. "Got any idea o' de time," she asked, impatiently.

He had taken a virgin pride in the valise, and was wrestling with it. "Le' me see——" He yanked out the coruscant disc, and Nicey's calm was star-cut. "Ten nine," he said, looking full and composed at her. It broke him up to be there facing her with the lamplight, stealing past her clouded face, giving an added lustre to the curves and brackets of her body.

"Well," she cried, aroused, "I'll be jail housed! You mean to tell me you had me waitin' down here fo' you fo' nearly a hour, yo' lanky suck egg son of a bitch!" She swung herself free of his grovelling embraces.

"Oh, Nicey," he begged, running after her, "don't go, sweet, I got de bag——"

"An' now yo' got it," she turned, interrogatively, "Wha' yo' expect to do with it?"

"Tek it on back there!" he avowed in one of his recurrent moments of self-assertiveness.

"Like hell we do!" she swore, "I'm gwine home."

"Oh, don't go, Nicey," he cried, swinishly, "I know a place. Don't let's go home after all the trouble we bin to."

"Aw, hell, boy, yo' give me a pain in the hip. Yo' know a place me eye! Where is this place at?"

"Come awn, I'll show yah! Don't be skeert, I know what I'm talkin' 'bout—"

"Like hell you do."

". . . it ain't the same one we bin to orready."

"Fur?" she perked up, with returning curiosity.

"Oh, no, jes' roun' de corner, I'll show yo'. Yo' tink it's fur? It ain't fur." His lurid efforts at self-assertion were taking a strange weight with her.

And so they peddled on. The dust, the city's dissolute-ness, the sensory pursuits, gave a rigorous continuity to themselves, and to their needs, sent them burning against the sinister sovereignty of Upper Fifth Avenue.

Here there was a cluster of figures aloft. "Come on up," cried the man, "look out, lady, fo' dat ole runnin' hoss. Little Bits, ain't I tell you not to leave yo' things knockin' 'bout like dat? Come 'n tek 'em in miss . . . look out, mistah, get up there, Mignon, an' let the gemman pass."

As a sort of imposed ritual the woman remarked, with a friendly frown suggestive of a discovery of startling import, "Ain't it hot tonight?"

"Ain't it though?" returned Nicey, flopping grandly by.

"This way, folks," cried the man, showing them to the parlor.

Passing the opulent hangings, sinking ankle deep in the rugs, Nicey was moved to observe, "Gee, I'd like to sleep in a swell place like this." As the female of the occasion she was led to the reddest plush couch in the room. Outside by the coat rack the two men stopt.

Primus' head bared, he was dabbing for the sweat sizzling in the rim of his hat. He put the valise down and went through his pockets for the money.

A princely urbanity governed the man. He edged the light behind him and scanned the most vagrant impulses lurking in Primus' eyes.

"Why don't you people come right?" he scolded in fath-

erly fashion. "Yo' don't come right," he insisted, trusting to the fleetness of the young man's mind.

Of the two listening there was no doubt that Nicey's ears were cocked nearer the big man's voice.

"Now take the lady," he went on, with disarming felicity, "Why—why don't she wear a hat?"

With the feet of a deer, the girl shot out the parlor, sped past St. Louis, through the vestibule and out into the Harlem night.

"I keep on tellin' 'em they won't come right," he said, as Primus trotted, valise in hand, down the stairs. "Don't they know that folks don't travel that-a-way?"

As she was about to merge in with the dusk saturating Lenox Avenue, he caught up with her.

"Jee, you're an unlucky bastard!"

"I'm sorry, Nicey."

"I never heard o' anybody with your kind o' luck. Yo' must o' spit on a hot brick or somethin'."

"I'd give anything to prove to you, Nicey, that I ain't nobody's simp."

"You're a long time provin' it, big boy."

"Oh, honey, giv' me time!"

"Say, big fellah, go to the judge, don't come to me. I can't giv' yo' any mo' time."

"I'd do anything—"

"Go stick yo' head in a sewer then."

"Let's go back, sweet, come, let's."

"Go back where?"

"I mean—with a hat. I'll go git yo' a hat."

"Christ, what next, buyin' me a hat. All I got to do is stick roun' you long enough an' you'll be buyin' me a teddy aftah awhile."

At a Hebrew hat shop on the Avenue they stopt and when they came out again Nicey was none the worse for a prim little bonnet with bluebells galloping wildly over it.

Crowds of high-hitting Negroes, stevedores from the North River docks—Cubans prattling in sugar lofts on the Brooklyn water front—discarding overalls and gas masks and cargo hooks—revelling in canes and stickpins

and cravats—strutting light browns and high blacks—overswept the Avenue. And the emotion of being part of one vast questing whole quickened the hunger in Nícey's and Primus' breasts.

Waddling down the long moldy corridor, he let the girl go on ahead of him. The man was behind him, carrying the candle and jingling keys, ready to exact the casuallest ounce of tribute. "Don't forget," he said, "that if you want hot water in the morning, it'll be fifty cents extra."

LOUIS GRUDIN

IDLE NOON

BENIGN old face with sinister marks,
Heavy cat gorged and battered,
Its sweet sleep covered with a scowl,
Who yawned to simulate indifference
While bright venoms scaled the cheeks,
It is the mind that rides him
When, bearing south his height
He brings his shoulders to the avenue
Of straight brave breasts on polished feet,
Awaits a whisper to dissolve his head,
That angry gong which strikes
One note at every blow.

The night air does the trick,
Draws on his jaws their tiny hebrew tune;
Above the quaint lament,
Beside a far distress,
His mind, a cautious moon,
Discovers happiness!

That glow that had survived
That moon's exhausting guess,
And reached its idle noon.

STANLEY BURNSHAW

FIVE POEMS

BOND OF TEARS

October nights are strange. Something they own
That draws one out of doors, toward roads where leaves
Are blown like slowly flying birds in the air;

And trees are full of a strange wind, one drawn down
From far blue space where cloudshapes arch and curve
A glory whose loveliness dazzles: makes one wonder

At earth and heaven: how one can look on these things
And lose oneself in their worship, remembering
Joy is only the gift for moments of pain,

Delight given in turn for an agony past
Suffered in helplessness. . . And it is on such faith
That one drinks of the happiness strewn on the living way,

That one dares to laugh. . . It is because we know
Of the triumph of pain that runs thru all our days,
Of the bond of tears that humbles the hearts of men. . . .

And as one walks beneath this terrible glory,
This awful force of sky, instead of exulting
Like a god-made thing, one goes in breathless sorrow,

Feeling that we must seek on the way to death
Those fragile joys of the mind, those subtle wonders
That flutter in and out of our singing days. . .

Such as the light in a loved one's face: dim sounds
That move in the soul; something stirring within
As one watches cargoes set out, bound for the dark.

SUNDAY EVENING

It is evening now, late evening, and the feet
Of a frail September wind are scurrying down
The Sunday street in this town of labor and gold.

One walks on slowly—and the stolid houses are strange
And staring to those who feel the earth as a meadow
Or hill: to them this way is a ruin of walls.

And the dwellers within these houses, who have built
On this stretch of land that once was a forest of flowers—
To them these men have thieved from the breast of earth

Granite, iron, coal—for centuries gone
Sleeping God-giants stretched out on the bed of the world,
Held to the heart of earth by the dark prayer of time. . . .

And the great rich trees felled suddenly, down from the
strength
Of thousands of years: ripped to make panels of wood
For the mindless savage living behind these walls. . . .

Walking these streets, seeing these men, having known them,
One asks if it were not better to make all men die
Than to let these heartless violate sacredness here

For their loveless ways . . . Walking this streetway of
men,
Feeling this pain, one begs of heaven a curse
To stop this murderer now at the throat of the world.

BEFORE DAYLIGHT

In the hour after dawn when the gay of earth
Are warmly slumbering, a strange people
Goes forth, whose mournful sounds you do not hear. . . .

Tired young men and girls with sleep-drawn eyes
Fighting to keep awake in the slow, chill cars
That drag them to those places where their limbs

(Now so wondrously curving thru their clothes)
Must nurture gears or give a furnace flame
Under the haunting phantom of the wheels.

Now they try to be merry, nudging each other,
Rasping a laugh to cover a look of desire,
A kiss of the limbs—but under all is despair. . .

And the cry of the young body for ages and ages
Used to the freedom of sleeping and loving and longing
In grass and rain. . . Now being tied by a plan

That rations time for longing, laughing, loving.
Barred from the hours of dreaming: fair young men
And blooming girls, now trampled in despair.

And you, wherever you are! Something is wrong. . .
God help us if men died to make a world
Where children breed on bitterness and despair.

END OF THE FLOWER-WORLD (A.D. 2300)

Fear no longer for the lone grey birds
That fall beneath the world's last autumn sky,
Mourn no more the death of grass and tree.

These will be as they have ever been:
Substance of springtime; and when flower-world ends
They will go back to earth, and wait, and be still—

Safe with the dust of birds long dead; with boughs
Turned ash long, long ago, that still are straining
To leave their tombs and find the hills again,

Flourish again, mindless of the people—
The strange ones now on a leafless earth—
Who seem to have no care for things in blossom.

Fear no more for trees, but mourn instead
The children of these strange sad men: Their hearts
Will hear no music but the song of death.

SONG OF A PRISONER

Because my eyes are blind with the darkness of care,
Because my senses lie feeble in darkness, I hear
Shrieks of the nightsea and rain where waters never were.

I listen to and see what only a bondsman can—
Night comes softly on, in a river of somber tones,
And my heart waits its echoes after the moon is gone. . .

Yet in a moment of deep release I lift, I rise
Into such glories as only a madman's words
Might picture; and such as a wise man could never seize. . .

So I believe of winter waters: visions I read
When a lake was a ruffle of frozen silver laid
By the wind, and the sky had the calm face of one dead.

And so of the earth and sky, so of a smooth black road
Whose body turned to a pearl river after the rain,
On whose ebon surface a mingling of rainbells played. . . .

But not that I guard these moments for what they are:
Nor that I cherish the sea's image because her shores
Are lovely with rock and pine and her cold face holds stars:

But for the wild peace that these respites give:
The holy release from a darkness where live ghosts move;
The kiss of glory, the tokens of heaven to have. . .

Moments whose lovely strength rises above all shards:
Such as when two standing in Spring, hear a river's chords
While moonlight falls in a shower of silver birds.

GERTRUDE DIAMANT

ADVENTURE

ALL pleasant things were in the future. He would rise every morning at five, rumble to work on the crosstown, feed his machine all day, then rumble home again. Meanwhile he could dream. Rumbling to work on the crosstown, feeding squares of white paper to his machine, eating lunch while it watched him, he could always dream. He could think of the blueness of his eyes, and the careful, sweet pose of his lips. He was Fritz Yuhrman. He could taste those syllables, their finality, and the mystery that they were he. There would never be a change, he did not want one. His days now were like an avenue of trees, and he had nothing to do but march past them.

Yes, all pleasant things were in the future. Early in the morning, the shop windows. Ineffable ladies powdering themselves, with large white puffs. Gloves and ties and derbies . . . a mysterious symbol of maleness. Pink and blue women's things, that curled under the show-glass like careless hair under water. The city was clean in the morning, a nut just plucked from the shell. It was pleasant and lonely to rumble along in the crosstown, always under the elevated, that straddled the street with a hundred squat legs. And all the signs were mysterious. He read them over and over like poetry. "V. Caprio, Cleaner . . . Plumbers' Supplies, Delaney." It made him think of a time when he used to sit in a churchyard, reading epitaphs.

Meanwhile the light crept down from the housetops, slowly, a blonde screen unrolling. Gold triangles wedged into the purple pavements. People came out of the asphalt, all dressed, with definite faces, knowing where they were going. The car turned at last—the car and the tracks stopped together. He was dropped like a leaf into the stream of workers.

That was good. Every morning it was good, to be going

with them, one step in a rhythm of many steps. Better than standing alone on street corners, not seeing the light creep down from the housetops—or listening to his hunger—a song buzzing too long in his brain. Now he heard it—the syncopating tap of women’s heels, the music of full limbs straining against tight skirts. Nobody turned. It would be like putting a knot into a taut chain going forward.

The factory, too, was a thing to wonder at—a domino of black windows on white walls. Every morning it baffled him. When he saw it from the crosstown, bright and floating in the sun, there was no building at all. It was a flag, black and white in squares, gay and relentless. Nearer, and the flag curled up—but the blackness and whiteness were still there, matched against each other like a game being played. Yes, a domino, meaningful and grotesque like all dominoes. And then nothing but a door, and they going in. So the day began. A gong now would ring him to his machine—a gong would ring him away from it. There would never be a change, he did not want one. Once when Fritz Yuhrman was a boy walking in the woods, he saw a cat measure a space, and walk it back and forth. This space he measured for himself.

Fritz Yuhrman had not always wanted to work in the factory. Long ago, he thought of becoming a singer. He was a little boy then, liking to sing. He had a thin, straight voice, enough thread of a voice to string a few notes on; and he wandered all day alone in the woods, weaving his thin thread of song in and out of the trees. Going home he did not stop singing. And the people of Ledyard who passed him shook their heads. Ah well, one might sing. But this Fritz Yuhrman, if he wasn’t singing—there he was! Not a sound from him! A young pine in the wind had more to say. But Fritz went on singing. It was his way of breathing.

“Hi, Fritz! Where have you been all day?” his father asked him. “Tramp! Let me look at you!”

With his stump of candle held close, old Michael saw his son—the ripe color of air playing on his cheeks, the tangled

dance of his straight hair, his blue eyes that the wind had polished. Bad! That was the way to come from a naked woman.

"Well, there's the supper, and there's the milk." At everything he pointed his candle, like a stubby finger flaming greedily towards things.

Fritz did not answer. He stood there knowing that something round and thin as a soap bubble was breaking into fragments. And in some way old Michael was causing it.

"I'm not hungry. I'm going to bed."

At first Michael assented cheerfully. "Well, there's the bed, and there's your nightshirt." But as Fritz gave his flaming finger wide berth, Michael's voice rose in a soft volley of questions.

"Not hungry," he said thoughtfully. "You say you're not hungry, Fritz? But how can that be? How can you not be hungry?"

He moved forward, eating the space between them slowly, as if it tasted good. He was not taller than Fritz; but his shortness was old, and his body rhythm different. His shortness had the hurling power of a squat projectile. As he stood before his son, there was a wayward innocence in his face. He seemed to be waiting for that click in his anger which should be the signal to hurl himself.

Suddenly Fritz shouted. "I'm not!" It came from the distance, a clear, taut shout, like the flash of a knife between them. Michael looked at him. Then he clicked himself round, and took his candle. In the air was the after-image of the shout, and Fritz stood under it, trembling.

But there were worse things than going hungry to bed. They said in the village that only old Michael and his son lived in the house. Yet at night Fritz knew better. Why did the pump wait for him to lie down, and then turn into a reared-up snake, looking at him all night, with the profile of its eye? And one star always came to the window, and stayed there, fastened like a bright bug on a petal. He knew he could touch it. But first it would make a hissing sound, and then sting him. Neither was that the worst of it.

Outside was the pine tree, always there, with one great palm held over the flat roof. It was a sour pine, and it stood there hating the house. Some night, he knew, it would happen. A rustling sound first—then a terrible creaking. The pine was lifting its palm! Ah God, it was happening! He heard it! The pine slapped the roof. . . .

Meanwhile old Michael came to bed, and Fritz had a new game to play. He hated his father. He could lie awake, and play it like a game.

Sometimes, in the morning, it was hard to get away. That was when three boys who lived near him saw him going. They came out on the road, and stood in his way, shouting. "Clam-face!" "Fritz-without-a-tongue!" Words that fell into a marvelous rhythm; one could even march to them. And it was true. He *had* no tongue! His face quivered into a knot. It flamed and sputtered at them. But he could not answer them, he had no tongue.

Better run away from them—to the hill today. Now up, up to its back. "Lie quiet, my hill, while I mount you." Here the arched back—there the flat neck and snout, always pressed close to the earth. It was an old animal, this hill—an animal so old that no one had ever seen it. He sat on it—he rode it all day. . . . If he could live forever alone on the hill, away from *them*. He would stay there always, quiet as a leaf, until the leaves would not even know he was there. How strange was the going to bed—the unlacing of his shoes—the close room under the blankets. Here, no strangeness.

One day when Fritz was lying alone on the hill, he saw a little furry pyramid, with two long, quivering ears in front. It moved, and four boys were stalking a rabbit. He saw them through the grass, a small, moving forest of brown legs. He heard stiff grass snapping between their toes. He heard their breathing heavy and dry, the sound of sweat in it. Until they were gone, Fritz lay still. His heart was knotting itself so that nothing could untie it. Straight and rigid he lay, as if they had stepped on him, a living thing in the grass. Then he was up shouting: "You . . ." He was

down, beating the earth, tearing it in fine, straight lines—biting dry, bitter mouthfuls. He hated them! He would pull them to pieces! He would run down the hill and throw himself on them. He would take them each in turn, and sit astride of them, and beat them with both fists, as if they were drums for him. There would be no one else in the world but Fritz Yuhrman. God would make it so. . . .

But when he rose at last, he did not understand it all. There were four boys chasing a rabbit. Robert's right foot had a wart on it. He had seen the wart riding through the grass on Robert's foot. And Peter could not keep up with the others—the little boy who always breathed so hard it sounded like sobbing. He was lying on the grass, he saw these things. That was all.

"It is time now, Fritz," his father said that night. "No more loafing for you. I need a man."

He didn't care. No use going there again. When he looked at the hill, it was like looking at words that he had forgotten how to read.

All day Fritz worked in the fields. Days became months and years, but Fritz was not aware. He no longer saw anything, he no longer sang. He moved in the rhythm of his work, as in an active numbness. His movements were like sounds that he could not hear. But sometimes, when he was alone, working and bending away from the sun, the brightness of the sky and the earth flowed on him suddenly, raping his senses. He felt the floating of the earth—but the floating and the brightness were unbearable. To save himself, he looked towards the house—over acres of fluid earth, rolling away from the spot where he stood, from his feet that had become the navel of a vast fountain. And he saw the house clinging to a slope. It was a small gray shell, clawing the earth with its walls, trying to stay erect in the floating brightness. He saw himself and old Michael going into the shell and coming out, and only in the darkness inside were they safe. He must go towards the house, now . . . carefully, to prevent himself from falling . . . into the darkness between the walls. But as he went down, it seemed to

him that he was not walking, but plunging in space; and the vast, green deck of earth was plunging with him. He saw the house soaring away from him high into air, swooping down again, yet always clutching the earth with desperate walls. And when he entered it at last, he felt weary and glad, like a boy who has caught a ball out of a rough sea.

Inside the house, Fritz drank cold water and cooled his forehead. For a while, now, his numbness was shattered. He saw the shapes and colors of things, again. But the shapes and colors were like a plaid cloth of terrible distinctness, waving in front of his eyes and torturing them.

Sometimes he was aware that he hated his father. Michael seemed to be everywhere. And at night they lay down together in one bed, like cattle sharing the stall. Between one breath and another, sleep came to old Michael. In the morning he was bending over Fritz, with a stump of candle in his hand. "Hi, Fritz! Wake up, it is day already." Never another word—never a word to show they were father and son. That didn't matter. Day and night mattered—two acres, one to be sown with work, and the other with sleep. Yes, Fritz knew his father, he knew what he was. When he swept the stable floor into a golden pyramid of manure—when he saw the flesh of cows quiver and come to rest—swiftly and mysteriously, in those moments, Fritz knew his father.

"Come, Fritz, faster," old Michael was shouting to him.

Fritz paused with an umbrella of hay over him. Now, now he would pitch it up, let it fall wildly, nowheres. Then to spring off the hay pile, run the length of the grass path, hurdle the fence—so into the road.

From under his umbrella of hay, Fritz saw the legs of old Michael Yuhrman, short and lumpy in their brown overalls. They were two stumps of earth, planted wherever they stood. And they could move, and plant themselves again. If one thread of hay blew down from the wagon, they knew it. And if he ran away, they would come after him, and be planted wherever he turned. Faster, then! Hay into the wagon! An upward waterfall of hay.

But that night Fritz woke with a singing in his hands. Now it could be done! In some way, quickly, it could be done! He rose on his knees and looked at Michael. His father was rolled tightly into the blankets, round and small like a bottle, with his little red nipple of a face sticking out. There was a singing in his hands. He felt joyful again, as if he were alone on the hill. . . .

One night Fritz found himself walking towards the village. He wanted to speak to someone. When the other young men of Ledyard saw him coming, the laughing and talking among them trailed off. They were quiet, but they left a little flame of gaiety burning, so that it could flare up when he left. With nothing to say, Fritz went towards them, and stood, for a while, timidly with them. Then they saw that it was a miracle, and it was comical—someone who had nothing to say! Their eyes flashed word of it to each other. They burst out laughing.

It was that way every night. He became a stage direction to them. They said: "It's Fritz Yuhrman," and they formed a circle around him. Soon Fritz also understood. He was not to meet them, but in this way. It was the pattern into which they fell. And they laughed at everything he said. He laughed himself. That, too, was in the pattern. But all the time he hated them.

He hated them, until that hatred became for him a fresh numbness. Because they cast him out with laughing, they had made his loneliness whole. Now he loved his loneliness as a bond between them; and they had given it to him as a man gives a child to a woman and leaves her. It was a reproach to them, and yet he thanked them for it.

He stopped seeking them, but spent his time cherishing his loneliness. He moved about his work with careful movements, conscious of his wholeness. He grew afraid of his own voice. He never spoke, but seemed always to be listening. He listened intently to the voice of the ropes when he raised a bucket of water. He listened to the rusty hinges sounding in the ducks' throats; to the wind, raging softly

and ceaselessly around his silence. He herded the cows with frantic hurlings of his arms and legs, rather than raise his voice. Speech seemed to him a remote and difficult thing.

Often he looked into the mirror and identified himself. He became aware of the blueness of his eyes, and the careful, sweet pose of his lips. He was Fritz Yuhrman. He did not know that he was a small man, with his head always on one side, as if listening.

And there was no going down to them again. In his mind he could see them, standing there, knotted together with whispering, and blown apart with laughing. They were laughing at him, because he was empty handed. Yet he knew of a way to possess something that they all must respect. Suppose he murdered his father. . . . "Fritz Yuhrman, he's murdered his father." "Did you hear! Fritz Yuhrman murdered his father!" Once there had been a murderer in the village, and everyone spoke of him. Fritz remembered it from the time he was little. They didn't laugh at him, either. No, surely no laughing then. It was clear, then. He must murder his father. And when this was clear, Fritz watched the body of his father wherever it went—riding a mower in the fields, or bending over the grindstone. He knew how the murder would look, from beginning to end. He saw it again and again. But about old Michael's body there was a terrible innocence, because he did not yet know. He saw his father's body yielding to him, and all its attitudes of terror. He thought of it passionately, as if he were about to possess a woman.

When Fritz went down the road at night, he had to pass Susan Beebe's house; and she was sitting on the porch nearly every night, alone. He was afraid of Susan Beebe. Her large red hands came out of her arms so suddenly. And there she was, always alone in the dark. At night he could not see her hands, but he thought he saw her neck, white and large and round, like the wooden church pillars. Suppose one night she should speak to him! It would be terrible, as though the high chiffonier near the sink had spoken to him. And yet it might happen. All day in the fields Fritz

thought of it. He seemed to hear the sound of Susan Beebe talking to him everywhere. When he heard it distinctly, he was frightened. And when he did not hear it, he kept on working—for hours, often—until it sounded again. And then, one night, she spoke to him.

“Hello, Fritz.”

“Hello, Susan.”

She came down to him with her arms folded on her back, holding her elbows. They walked back and forth on the road, between two lamps that made a cage of light.

Every night after that, for three autumn months, Fritz and Susan walked together in the cage of light. Forward they went, from the edge of darkness to the edge of light; and back again, over their own steps. Only their shadows, walking before them, straining away sideways from their feet, dared pass into the darkness. Quickly, then, they turned and dragged their shadows back again. There were only a few words to be said. Susan was content to walk beside him, holding her elbows in back; and he was afraid of her.

One night came the first rustle of cold wind, a whip faintly swished. As if a someone had spoken, they looked at each other; and the fear of winter looked back at him and at her out of their faces.

“It’s going to be cold, soon,” Fritz said.

“Yes, it’s winter almost.” And she held her elbows tighter. But they turned without other words, and walked back to the verge of darkness. Fritz wondered how he would see Susan in the winter. He would have to sit in her parlor, seeing her in the light. She would be knitting. . . . He saw her large red hands coming out of her arms. She might look at him archly—and her small head would hang back on the white pillar of her neck. Her body was in the rocker, straight and upright; but her long limbs pointed at him under her skirt, and her knees lolled away from each other. He saw them, thin buds raised on her round legs, that grew in trunks from their base of shoes. He was terrified. If only the winter would keep away. But just then

a ribbon of leaves blew down before them, like the waving scarf of an enemy.

"The leaves are blowing down," Susan said. As they passed under the lamp Fritz looked at her, and saw meanings in her face that made him afraid. She stopped, and bent towards him a little, still holding her elbows in back. "Fritz!" But he walked rapidly on, into the darkness, and left her there.

He walked with a sudden sense of gaiety and flight. He was going away! Why hadn't he thought of that before? It was so simple. It was such a good thing to do. Yes, the sky was going farther away, and the stars were getting smaller. Already the trees looked like masts swaying on a ship, with their black branches for cross bars, and the wind for waves, and the earth for a deck. The whole earth was blowing like a ship. Every twig on trees, and every board in houses was creaking. The earth was tossing like a ship, and he was walking alone on it . . . sailing it, sailing it through windy darkness forever. There *were* ships and sailors, of course. There were other places. There were cities, where one did nothing all day. One could stand on a street corner in the city, and see people passing from morning to night—and every person had a different face. Never the same face passed again. Nobody there would know he was Fritz Yuhrman. They would let him alone. In and out of the noise and the faces he could go by himself, neutral as the sound of a drum going in and out of the other music. A great vagueness was the city. . . . Best go there, away from Susan, away from Michael, and the others. Why, if he went, they would have something new to say: "Fritz Yuhrman, he's gone to the city." That was surely a smart thing to do. "Why didn't I go, too? He's smart, that Fritz."

He woke his father up to tell him. When old Michael heard it, he laughed. For minutes at a time, he lay laughing. Yet the next morning, Fritz went. Snow lay all over, blurring the shapes of everything. He could not see any place where he used to go as a boy. Of all those landscapes, nothing was left but the smell of air.

In that way Fritz came to the factory. Jonah Weisbord, the small man who shared his room was foreman in the factory, and took him there.

"You don't have to stay, if you don't like it," Jonah said. "But look, the work is easy. You just go like this all day," he passed an imaginary something into the air. "No trouble. No brains, no muscles needed. And they pay you for it, into the bargain."

That seemed reasonable. It was clear that if you didn't have to think of what you were doing, you could think of other things. It was like not doing any work at all. Just as Fritz had imagined it. And then to be paid into the bargain. . . . And after his first day, Fritz told Jonah he would stay.

On the floor where Fritz worked there were eight machines in a row. They were large machines, always working together. They made Fritz think of eight dancers, moving through the same figures to one rhythm. Often he crawled under them, and crouched in back, where he could see the shuttles, like dancers' backs, flying towards him and away. He liked to stay there as long as they let him. Crouching there, he felt he was part of the dance. Slowly, with a sense of numbness, he let the rhythm of the machines come on him. He felt their methodical ecstasy and their weariness.

In the daytime everything was pleasant. His machine understood him. It let him dream, and it didn't laugh at him. All it wanted was that white squares of paper should be laid on its tongue; and every time it swallowed, it smiled broadly. In the daytime, he scarcely heard the noise of the machines. But at night a queer thing happened. They all stood before him, and they were not dancing this time, but singing. They sang with a thousand plunging gestures, as if the song would burst them. And the song and the gestures were obscene. And at night, often, he dreamt that they were laughing at him—the other workmen in the factory. But he knew that couldn't be. Here they liked him. They listened to him respectfully, and thought well of him. It would be that way always. The future was clear and pleasant.

"Come on, Fritz, sing something." It was the half hour for lunch, and at first they were all quiet, as if the sudden silence were darkness, making them ashamed. But Jonah, the shameless one, always called out loudly: "Come on, Fritz, sing something."

Then Fritz sang for them, weaving his thin thread of voice in and out of the still machines. They all winked at each other, and jerked their thumbs toward him. When he saw that, his voice jerked also, as if their thumbs were tweaking his throat. When he did not feel like singing, Fritz went over to talk to them. Listening was Jonah, who stood with his knees slightly bent and wide apart, a base for his hands. That was the way his knees laughed at Fritz. There was Ian Harlan, too, a tall fellow, whose forefinger was always crooked in his hair, scratching away his wonder and admiration. Fritz loved to think of things to say, to make the tall man scratch harder.

"If I saw an old woman," Fritz told them one day, "climbing the steps in the park—and if the day were slippery, why, I'd take her right up in my arms, and carry her up to the top. Even if the day were not slippery, I'd do it."

"Sure you would," Jonah answered, with his knees laughing wider. "You couldn't lift an old woman. You're smaller than any old woman. But tell me, Fritz. *Did* you ever see an old woman, climbing the steps in a park?"

Oh the fine scorn of his answer!

"Good, then!" and Jonah winked at the others. "Now, Fritz, since you really saw such an old woman, why didn't you pick her up, and carry her to the top?"

Jonah straightened his knees archly, and they all looked solemnly at Fritz. Only the tall man was scratching his forelock. Well, Fritz would have to think of something else. But Jonah was thinking, too.

"Tell me, you," Jonah said one day. "Would you speak to a half man?"

"And where can half men be found?" Fritz asked loudly.

The small man spat. "Tcht! I know one for sure. Below here, nothing. He walks on all fours. It's a trick. Only George knows how."

"And why shouldn't I speak to him?"

Jonah's knees laughed again.

"Because nobody talks to a half man. See, Fritz? Nobody talks to a half man. Why, he stands near the park every day, and when it looks like rain, he shouts out to the people: 'It looks like rain.' And when it looks like a thunder storm, he shouts: 'It won't storm much . . . may not storm at all.' And he's right! Every time, he's right! He knows the weather, sure. Only nobody listens to him, because he's a half man. They all run away from him. Now, you, would you talk to him?"

Fritz answered: "Tell me where he is, and I'll go to-night, and talk to him."

"But nobody *does*," Jonah concluded in triumph. "Pah! They all run away from him, and he gets angry, and shouts after them: 'Nobody talks to a half man.' That makes them run away harder." Jonah spit between his knees.

But that night, when Fritz was falling asleep, he saw the half man standing near his bed. His forehead was laid to the blanket, as though his head hurt. He was breathing hard, like the little boy Peter, and he was pointing up at the ceiling. Fritz lay paralyzed. He knew that the half man could leap and dance. It would happen before his eyes. . . .

Yet the days were pleasant enough. He did not want anything to change for all the years to come. He was a full cup. Not a drop of him should be spilled or added.

Then, one day, they discharged him. It was Jonah who tapped him on the shoulder. He said nothing. He just cocked his thumb at the door. The men and the machines all stopped to watch him go. The tongue of his own machine was lolling out, but he had to leave it that way. The sudden silence was like a lifted whip. He went before it fell.

Down . . . down the steps . . . faster . . . or he would hear it, the men and the machines laughing. And now he knew! They were laughing at him all the time . . . and when they were tired of it, they whipped him out. With a gesture they whipped him out, though a dog requires

words. But he would hurt them . . . soon they were coming out. He waited for them in a doorway. Soon they were coming. . . .

He would flay each one with his eyes . . . thrust his look at them like poison spewed out of his eyes. He would draw their hearts into a thin line between the tightness of his lips. They would be aware of him. . . . At last they would have to swallow him, each one as he passed—and he would taste bitter for them. But they passed and did not see him. Out of the doorway in which he stood, fell the black domino of his shadow. They walked on the shadow, but they did not see him.

Fritz Yuhrman stepped out of the doorway. He felt joyous, he tried to think why. Then he remembered that he had forgotten his hat. He must go to the factory to get it. He did not feel himself walking the half block. There was no one on the street but a man talking to them of God. The man lifted his hand, and it burned brightly in the air. His short fingers were five candles burning of an even length. Fritz was joyful because he had forgotten his hat, and because the man's hand was burning in the air. The door let him in—the stairs lifted him.

The machines were sleeping already. They were sleeping like folded birds, with their heads tucked down and their wings out. He went to his machine. It whined itself awake, and began to swallow the white squares of paper that he laid on its tongue. It swallowed all there was, and Fritz looked around for more. But while he looked, it caught his arm, and would not let it go. It was pulling him like a playful child, and he had to follow. Somewhere he heard a shout. He saw Jonah running toward him. It was funny the way he ran, with his knees way ahead of his body.

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LOUIS UNTERMEYER

MAD PROPOSAL

DARE to be a bather
Where the sea is black;
Come and tear your hands to gather
Rue upon the rock.

Where a red sun harries
All it burns upon,
We shall eat the bitter berries
Poisoned by the moon.

Some have all the highlands'
Laughing fortitudes;
We have but the evil silence
Heard in hostile woods.

Not for us the safer
Roadway cut and cleared;
Lost in bogs we plunge to braver
Paths where none has dared.

For our body's fever
No cool river runs,
We shall seek no bread while ever
In this world are stones.

Stones to feed our hunger,
Stones to make our bed:
These I offer, these last longer
Than our earthly need.

Rise and leave your father;
Never dare look back;
Come and break your heart to gather
Rue upon the rock.

WILFRID BENDALL

TOIL

Toil, long, stubborn, amorphous toil, wrung drawn and dry,

The carcass of an old god, stretched over earth,

The still, electric husk, sagging elastically

From mountain to mountain over imperturbable distance,

The head in the morning, the feet, in the evening of the days

Lending to the valleys a suffocating sense of overburdened life,

To the hills, a high, suspicious counterpoise; the long new mounds

Reared against the firmament, a wavering deteriorated lip

Whose smouldering decay blurs the drawn vault above and gives

A sterile version of the morning lights old fresh and flaming beauty.

A dun, powerful, deliberate shadowing laid over every thing,

This complex and heavily sagging anatomy stretched

Into respective hours, mauve and purple and grey,

The head coronated with sickening flowers,

A putrid mass of old pains sunk in the flourishing herbage,

The hands and arms and legs spasmodically splayed

Caressively interposing the luxuriant perpetual forests,

Intimately affecting the microcosm of irresponsible men,

An engrossing matrix of quiet, essential usurpation

Matted into the fields private forests, the pious decay

Simulates again a perennial strength and lustre,

Presciently saturating the labouring earth

(Much as successive vegetating loams the soil)

And will affect a bothersome renewal, an elaborate campaign

Commencing fresh, straight and stiff at the top of a hill,

Shot with glorious sunlighting and spun about with cloud-nets,

(Daystars flashily manifesting the extraordinary occasion)

In the eyes of all men, without a sound, this fresh erectness
Slowly glides down the hillside mile by mile
Obstinately overreaching the cottage, the village's theater
of awe,

The town's ignorant, stolid and faithful wonder,
Accepting toil as the essential deity and overhearing
The powerful, dogged insinuation he utters, in stepping
Through sun, and fog, and darkness, and the wrinkled
cretonne of the storm,

The lacy shore of the sea and its printed tinware depth,
He steps on obstinately unstopped, the majestic footsteps
Potently embracing a down-trodden land:
He treads into the carefully subscribed harness of a million
families,

A document spread on the sky for his sightless perusal
Till he insanely, inevitably falls into the receptive gape of
open mouths;

Then occurs again the old, obstinate, stubborn procedure
Of letting the great body irreverently mat the earth,
And of tolerating the fallen image with ill-feigned joy,
And the fantastic toil of seeing that every subject is re-
pentant,

And of stimulating the motherly expectancy of coming
generations

To set up new lures, and teach all the common folk
New conceptions and new rhythms and diapasons of toil,
And to generate a stupendous mutter of toil over all earth,
Rhythm that shakes, stirs up the bottomless pit,
As the fury of renewal sets up again with nascent hymns
The grasping essence of this obstinate robber, this stubborn
procrastinator's
Indispensable fantasy.

NATHAN ASCH

THE COUNTRY

IN the morning the first thing he had done was to look at the weather report. The paper had said "Unsettled," and he had worried. It meant rain; it meant maybe a fog, bad weather, and they wouldn't be able to go. She'd come over to him and say: "Jimmy, I guess we'd better not go. Maybe another Saturday afternoon." During the morning at the office he stepped out every few minutes on this excuse and that to look at the sky high up between the roofs. Sometimes it looked white, colorless, at other times a dirty cloud would be seen above the canyon. And Jimmy went back to the office. Maybe they would have to call it off. She wouldn't want to go. It's no fun to go to the country on a rainy day. She'd come over and say: "We'd better not go."

But as the morning went on the sky cleared. Shadows came into the office rooms and bright spots of yellow sun, and a breeze blew that cleared the foggy air. Everyone looked more cheerful. Everyone said: This will be a fine Saturday afternoon. We can go to the game, or walk on the streets, or just spend the afternoon doing nothing on this fine day. Jimmy felt easier. Probably they'd go now. She wouldn't be able to find an excuse for not going. They'd go to the country. It sounded funny to go to the country. He had said to her: "Maybe you'd better not tell the other fellows where you're going with me. Maybe you'd better tell them we're going to a movie or something. But we won't. We'll go to the country."

She had said all right. She had said her mother would make some sandwiches, and she'd wrap them up to look like a shoe box, so nobody would know; and he'd better meet her on the corner outside the cigar store. Yes, she had admitted. It would look funny just going to the country for no reason at all.

So they went to the country. They met outside of the cigar store, and he quickly turned around to see that no one from the office was looking. She took his arm, and they hurried toward the ferry. Outside it was nice. Sun shining; shadows black; people walking on the streets happy, hurrying home, not wanting to miss any of this fine sunny day.

They were on the ferry, sitting upstairs on the outside, Jimmy and the girl, arms interlinked, very close to each other, because there wasn't much room there; lots of people on the ferry and lots of noise; people talking, children shouting at the gulls, at the ships around, an orchestra of three Italians playing popular songs. She was telling him all sorts of things, gossip about the office, and about her girl friends, what she had done last night, whom she had been with, what they had said, and what she had said. She was animated, happy, her head turned up, looking at his mouth, as if wanting to see what he would answer. Jimmy had the cigar box in one hand. The other was in his pocket, holding a cigarette. He wanted to smoke.

They were going to the country. This is what the country meant to Jimmy: A boy scout camp when a little boy. A ball game outside the city. A rough made diamond, a wire screen back of the home plate, and beyond, grass, trees, and a village. Joy riding with a friend whose father owned a car. A black road; cars passing; villages passed; a couple of girls they had tried unsuccessfully to pick up. Jimmy was now going to the country with the girl and he did not know where he was going.

Otherwise it would have been the movies. They would have gone into the dark theatre, gotten themselves a seat at the side near the rear. For a while they would have looked at the picture. Then their hands would have met. Then after a while he would have kissed, or would have tried to kiss her. Then they would have gone out. He'd have taken her home. Gone into the dark parlor. And have kissed her more.

The girl whom Jimmy was taking to the country was a file clerk in the same Company where Jimmy was an assistant

bookkeeper. Her name was Marion. Jimmy had not known she worked in the same place he did when he had met her at a dance of the Social Club. He had met her, had taken her home, had tried to kiss her, had done so, had tried something else and had been told No. He had seen her the next day at the office. There were hundreds working for the Company. That was why Jimmy had not met her before.

Of course where they were going he did not know. He had an idea they would take a car once they arrived on the other side. And this they did when the ferry wedged into the slip and every one crowded out. The car was full, and they stood. Marion was much shorter than he was and she leaned against him, much as if they were dancing. He felt too as if they were dancing. What to do when they got to wherever they were going he did not know either. They would eat their lunch. And then. . . . They couldn't begin to chase each other, after all. He had no idea what they would do. Anyway the idea of the country now that they were approaching it frightened him more and more. He was uncomfortable. He wished he had not suggested it. He liked the girl, liked her as he liked any other girl whom he had not yet felt fully. But what would they talk about, what would they do, once the sandwiches were eaten, and it wouldn't be time yet to go home.

He was a good looking boy, with nice eyes, and Marion was willing to like him a lot. Anyway she was willing to like any fellow a lot who would not try to get too much the first time he met her. Not that it mattered whether he tried to or not—she could handle any of them—but if they did not try for too much the first time they met her, then she would like them more the second time, and maybe allow them more.

She had no more idea of the country than he had. To her it meant a summer boarding house with greasy papers, kids squealing, a grape arbor in the rear of the house you go to at night with fellows. She had gone with Jimmy because he had asked her, because she was willing to like him, and because she had nothing to do on this particular Saturday afternoon. Probably if he had said to her: "Let's take an airplane ride," or "Let's go and feed the animals in the

zoo," she would have answered: "Sure. Let's. Anything to pass the time away."

So they were both very embarrassed at the idea of the country. And they wanted to reassure themselves. So he looked at her and said:

"Isn't this swell?"

And she answered:

"Yes, isn't it?"

But they weren't very sure.

The car was emptying. Around them things looked like the country. Trees. And grass. And a big bunch of trees. Then a stream. Country bungalows. They even saw a cow. They looked at the cow and said nothing.

It looked like time to get out. In a movie you know which is the best seat to sit in. If there is vaudeville, you try to get front seats. If just a picture, you sit in the middle. If you're with a girl and want to have some fun you sit in the rear at the side so the usher won't see you. But where is the best place to get out in the country? Shall you get off near a stream? Or where there is a bunch of trees? Or where there is grass? Jimmy did not know. And Marion couldn't help him.

The car was now almost empty. It was going along at a great speed through the country; making a lot of noise and leaning when it turned a curve. Jimmy pulled the cord.

"Let's get off," he said.

The car stopped; the door swung open; they got off, he holding the cigar box; the door of the car shut. The car banged and was off. They were in the country.

"Well, come on," said Jimmy in desperation.

She took his hand, and they walked across the road, and went on the grass, which felt funny under their feet, and went further. Then they saw some trees. So they went toward the trees; and beyond the trees, there were more trees, and it looked quiet there, as if there had never been anyone there since the beginning of the world. For the first time in their lives each one of them felt completely alone. They might shout and yell, and do as they pleased, and no one would ever hear them, and they were frightened.

If Marion had been younger and had not so far handled by herself all sorts of dangerous situations, she would have cried. And if Jimmy hadn't been a man, hadn't always understood that a man never shows emotion, never lets anyone know how he is feeling, but wears a hard, set face, Jimmy would have cried too.

If there had but been anything they knew around them. A house, or an automobile, or even a cigarette butt lying on the ground; if they had but seen anything they were used to, they would have felt easier. They would have been able to dismiss this grass, these woods, this sky, with a sneer. Sky? Go on! Grass? Go on! But there wasn't. It was all sky and grass and trees, and nothing else but themselves. She in a very short skirt and silk stockings, and he in perforated oxfords and a blue suit.

It was getting very hot, and Jimmy's collar was bothering him. He wanted to take it off, but couldn't. He had a feeling something might happen, what he did not know. Jimmy was feeling very formal and very much out of place in this country. And then they would have to sit down finally, and how to sit down the way they were dressed? Jimmy began to swear under his breath. Not very loudly, because he was afraid of the country. It awed him.

The ground had lowered under their feet. Trees turned to bushes; and finally they came to a stream. There was a big rock near the stream. It was cooler there, and they couldn't walk any further. They decided to sit down. Jimmy took a handkerchief out of his pocket, opened it, spread it carefully on the rock, and sat down on it. Marion stood. Her face had lost its immobile expression and her mouth was twitching. Then carelessly she too sat down on the rock. Her face contemptuously said: This is a fine place you brought me to. What are we going to do now that we're here?

They had nothing else to do, so they ate. Really they did not want to eat; the food felt hard and dry in their mouths; they were thirsty and there was nothing to drink. Each one of them thought of going back on the road and getting a return car, and each one of them was afraid to

say it. They had wanted to go to the country; they were in the country; they should be satisfied.

Around them birds were singing, the stream ran down, a squirrel came, looked at them, and ran off. It was cool where they were, cool and nice, and as they went on eating, slowly the realization came that this dislike for the country was something in their own heads, that they really should not dislike it. It was a pretty good place after all. Only a place they knew nothing about couldn't be good, so they didn't want to admit to themselves that they were beginning to like it.

It was Marion who really began to like this country. At first she sat on the rock; but the rock was hard, and the ground looked soft; so she slipped off on the grass, as if unconsciously, as if against her will, that Jimmy should not think she actually wanted to sit on the grass. No, she didn't. They had come here expecting the same thing they had in the city, and the thing was different. And they could allow nothing different, nothing that they could not understand. So they had to show that they disliked it, that the city was a much better place.

But the country worked slowly. At first it got only Marion. She sat on the grass, her skirt carelessly raised itself, one of her shoes slipped off, and she did not put it on again; then she took her hat off: all as if she didn't actually want to do it. Her face relaxed: it was neither hard nor soft; it was an ordinary face. And she even ate her sandwich with more appetite.

But the way the country really got Jimmy was: He was thirsty, and he had an idea that the water in the stream could be drunk. And very much as if he were doing something else, as if the water in the stream were the last thing in his mind, he walked down to the edge, put his foot on a rock that stood a little way off, formed his hands into a cup, filled them with water, and drank.

A few drops trickled down on his pants, some more on his shoes. He wanted to get angry, but he couldn't. He just looked at the glistening drops on the blue cloth, and said nothing. Then he called her:

"Come on down and get a drink."

She did. Out of his hands. More water spilled over their clothes. They made believe they did not notice it.

The country was getting them more and more. They were still silent. Anyone looking at them would think they were very uncomfortable, very much out of place. But they were beginning to like it here. In themselves they stopped fighting this country around them and began to accept it.

So that finally when Marion took off her other shoe and her stockings and went wading, Jimmy thought nothing of it. It seemed perfectly natural. And when Jimmy began to throw pebbles into the water near her, she shrieked, but not angrily. She enjoyed the water wetting her dress.

Jimmy took off his coat and collar and tie, rolled up his sleeves and tried to prevent Marion from getting out of the water. So she splashed him and got him wet too; and they both laughed.

Then she said: "Look at the flowers," and went barefooted to pick them. Jimmy lay down on the grass near the rock, belly down, face cupped in his hands. He saw bugs and ants, carrying splinters. Then he discovered an ant hill. Lots of little holes in a mound of sand, with ants running in and out, appearing and disappearing.

It was quiet here. The stream below, the birds singing, the grasshopper that cracked occasionally, only made the place quieter. This clearing with the rock in the center of it seemed the whole world. Nothing beyond existed. The city not far away did not exist. Jimmy had the feeling that he was away, alone, at peace.

Marion came near, her arms full of flowers, walking uncomfortably on her bare feet. She sat down at his side and began weaving a crown. She did not look at him, but seemed very serious, very intent with what she was doing, braiding one flower into another, until three together came out.

For a time he felt content. Even Marion coming near him made him think of nothing. For a time there was nothing in him. In a way there were things, for he felt something going through him, something very warm and very quiet, something he had never felt before; as if a mild elec-

tric shock went through him with a pleasant sensation. He wanted to shake it off, he wanted to sit up. Things like that should not happen to him, nothing he could not explain should ever happen to him. But in a way he was too sleepy, too content to sit up; so he gave himself up to the shock, that combined with the sound of the stream, with the singing of birds, with the smell of the grass, of the woods about him, till he closed his eyes.

Marion sat at his side, busy plaiting flowers, thinking of nothing, feeling nothing. It was as if she belonged to this country, to this peace.

Then Jimmy began to think. He began to consider what they were doing, what position they were in. Still reposed, still relaxed, he began to wonder what would happen if someone should ask him what they had done on this Saturday afternoon. If he should want to answer, what could he say? "Well, we went over to the country. And at first we were scared. And then we kind of liked it. So I lay down on the grass and was satisfied, and Marion made a crown of flowers."

Well, if he should say it? He pictured to himself one of his friends to whom he should say a thing like that. What would the other answer? Why, he would burst out laughing. "That's a fine way to spend a Saturday afternoon! Go to the country! Close your eyes! Have a girl with you! And let her make crowns of flowers!" If he should acknowledge a thing like that, he would never hear the end of it. Making crowns! Lying in the grass and closing your eyes!

He opened his eyes and sat up.

The smell of the grass disappeared, and the scene around him began to look a little foreign, as if he had only thought he was at home here, but he really wasn't. And even if he was, he shouldn't have been. A man has no right to lie on the grass and smell flowers, or watch an ant hill with a million ants. Again in a way he became uncomfortable, did not know what to do with the things around him. Actually he should not have begun to feel so, because actually he liked it here, and wanted to stay here, but it was his head that began working, that began to feel uncomfortable.

He looked at Marion. At first she did not notice his look, but went on plaiting her long crown, but then she did notice him, and turned toward him, smiled, and then looked back to her flowers.

Even Marion, even Marion must think he was an awful fool to take a girl out to a God forsaken spot and do nothing to make her enjoy herself. Now if they had gone to an amusement park, where there is noise, and dancing, and attractions, she would have had a good time, but as it was, how could she?

He was very angry at himself. He did not want to be, he did not want to think, to consider himself, and this girl toward him. He wanted to stretch out again on the grass, close his eyes and give himself up to the warm, funny feeling. He wanted to, but he couldn't. In his mind he saw his friends grinning, laughing at him. "You're a fast worker, aren't you? Take a girl out and make her weave crowns!" He saw himself on the rear seat of a dark automobile, with a girl at his side. Action! Or in a hallway after an evening at the movies, with the girl in a way anxious to go home—Father will be awfully mad. Look at the time—but really not anxious at all. Action! Action!

He looked again at Marion, measured through her with his eyes. And then saying to himself: I don't want to do it. I don't know why, but I don't feel that way now; he leaned toward her, put his arm around her, and tried to kiss her.

"Don't," she said, pushing him aside.

He was glad she said Don't. In a way it seemed funny that there should be times when you don't want to kiss a girl, when you don't want to notice her, when you live with yourself, satisfied with yourself. The feeling had never come to him before, and at first he gave himself up to it, and again mentally closed his eyes, and then some more thoughts shot through him.

Again he saw the hallway. When a girl says Don't, it doesn't mean anything. It means she's bashful, or coy, or she just wants you to want her more. Something in him said: Why must you act now as you act in a hallway?

And something answered: I can't act in any other way. I don't know how. She was here with him. She had to be kissed. There was no getting away from that. You don't go out with a girl unless you are going to kiss her.

So he did the same thing. Again he did not want to do it, was ashamed of himself because he did not want to do it, and forced himself. He rose a little, and hugged Marion tightly, and he forced a kiss on her. Then when he had finished, he leaned back and looked at her. And she was very angry. She said in a loud, slightly squeaky voice:

"Cut it out. Haven't you got any sense?"

She seemed irritated, as if she didn't understand why he should want to do a thing like that. Her face looked different than the faces of other girls he had tried to kiss. When they had said: Don't stop; they had giggled, they had averted their eyes. They had wanted to show in some way they did not want him to stop. But Marion didn't. She looked straight at him when she said that, with an angry look, in a way saying: What do you want to do that for? Why do it here? This is not the place. This is not the time.

And he did understand that look of hers, he did know that he should stop now; that not only did he not want to kiss her, to bring her close to him now, but that she did not want him to do it either. He should go back to his grass, keep on smelling it, close his eyes. Back.

But he didn't. Something drove him to it. Something forced him to keep on trying to kiss her. In a way he was desperate. He did not want to do it. This was not the place for it. But he couldn't do anything else. He simply couldn't. He had to kiss her now, although it brought him no pleasure, although he knew he was annoying her.

So he sat right down at her side; he brushed the crown she had been braiding so carefully aside, and he tried to force her to kiss him. He held her very tight, and with one arm held her head up, clasped the other round her shoulders and pressed his lips against her mouth. It was a hard kiss he gave her, hard and dry and distasteful like the food they had eaten when they had first come.

And although she struggled with him, and said: No. Go away. I don't want to. Let me alone, I tell you. Go away; still he kept on. And he was very sad. While struggling with her, while trying to force her, he felt as if he had lost something, something he had, that meant much to him.

The country disappeared. All that was around them was a bunch of trees, and a stream, and grass that was good to kiss a girl on. And right near them was a city, dark automobiles, dark movies, dark parlors.

Then he saw it was of no use. The kissing brought him nothing. He did not enjoy it and neither did she. Her dress got crumpled, her hair became disarranged, and on the grass around them lay the torn flowers. She shook him off and said:

"I'm going back."

She put her hat on and adjusted her shoes. He also got himself ready. He looked again at the dead, ugly, unfamiliar country.

Then together they walked to the car.

WILLIAM SAPHIER

THREE POEMS

MILLING MACHINE CHIPS

HE is a Byzantine saint
on the ball end of the handle
on his milling machine.
Grey light from three sides
reflects on the shining ball
and he sits on the fourth.
The windows on the three sides
decorate the shining ball
and form a silver aura
with the man in the center
of the ball end of the handle
on his milling machine.
With the revolving handle
the stripes on the three sides of the ball
grow thick and short,
thin and long,
till they almost touch the face
of the man reflected
on the ball end of the handle
on his milling machine,
who grows short and stout,
tall and slim,
in the center of the silver aura
and vanishes
when the ball is farthest away
from the man reflected
on the ball end of the handle
on his milling machine.

THE PORTER

Nails and heels was the shop
where a winged accident gave him a broom.
Snapping teeth was its talk,
it cracked his ear drums
and whipped his eyes wild.
Yet he found the tanning good.
Often he tenderly winked at his worn broom:
'Bye and bye we be all right.'

He lived on the love of a broom.

TO ONE INJURED

One day there will come to you
a little fellow,
not overstrong,
a trifle deaf,
slightly lame,
with a shaky walk,
eyes deep in hollowed frame,
his voice hardly loud,
asking forgiveness:
the load he has laid on you
is crushing him to the ground.

MORLEY CALLAGHAN

AMUCK IN THE BUSH

GUS RAPP worked in Howard's lumberyard near the Spruceport dock on Georgian Bay. He lived with his old man in a rough cast cottage two doors along the road from the boss's house. The road faced the yard and the bay. He had worked in the lumberyard as a laborer for five years, loafing a lot when the sun was hot. The boss didn't fire him because he looked after his old man. Gus didn't like the boss, Sid Walton, but liked watching Mrs. Walton, who often brought her husband a jug of iced tea on a hot day.

Gus was unloading planks from a box car on the siding at the board platform near the general office. The sun was hot on the platform and burned through the boots of the men piling lumber.

The lumberyard was on an inlet at the southern pier below the shipyard and the old tinned and weathered brown grain elevator. The inlet's water line at the lumberyard had gone back fifty feet and smooth flat rock and small rocks baked in the sun. Piles of lumber with sloping tops were back a ways from the shoreline. The low brick buildings of the milling plant were at the foot of the pier. On the water side of the plant sawdust was heaped up and packed down. Further back from the lumberyard the long road, curving down from the station, followed the shoreline south beyond the town and the wooded picnic park, further along skirting the bush at Little River, all the way to the rifle ranges.

Gus Rapp, sweating a lot and chewing his moustache, could stand in the box car door, looking up the street to the station and over the town to the blue mountains where a red sun always set brilliantly.

Gus was working in the box car, kneeling on the lumber close to the roof. The box car had a stuffy smell of damp fresh wood. He was on his knees swinging the eight by two planks loose, shoving them down to the door where they slid

into the hands and close to the hips of two men, who trudged across the platform, piling the planks on two sawhorses. By craning his neck to one side Gus could see through the door the wide brimmed straw hat, the strong neck and the thick shoulders of Sid Walton, who kept telling the men to show a little life. Gus didn't feel much like working. The planks slid down slowly. He wanted to lay flat on his belly and look out through a wide crack in the car to the milling plant where little kids in bathing suits were jumping down from the roof in the sawdust.

Walton yelled to get to work. Gus swore to himself. It was hot and he was sleepy and it would have been fine to sit with his back against the side of the car. Walton yelled and Gus yelled back. Sid told Gus to trade places with one of the men. Gus made sure where Walton stood on the platform and swung a plank loose, sliding it far down, swinging it in a wide curve. A man yelled and Walton ducked. Gus stood sullenly in the box car door, his brown arm wiping his brown face, his hair and forehead damp. He jumped down to the platform.

"You damn big hunkie," Walton yelled, running at Gus. He picked up an axe handle and whacked him hard three times across the back. Gus went down on his knees and hollered but got up kicking out. He tried to pick up a plank but the men grabbed him. They held him and he yelled, "You big son of a bitch." Sid was bigger than Gus and stood there laughing, legs wide, his big hands on his hips. Gus's back hurt him very much and he rubbed his shoulder.

The boss said seriously, "All right Rapp, you can clear out for good."

Gus picked up his coat and cursed some more on the way over to the time office. He left the yard and went down past the station, cutting across the tracks north of the water tower, intending to drink squirrel whiskey in Luke Horton's flour and feed store at the end of Main street. His brown sweater was tucked in at his belt, he carried his coat, and his overalls were rolled four inches above his heavy boots.

He was alone with Luke in the room back of the store that

smelt of dog biscuits and chicken food. Gus sat at the small table feeling good on the whiskey. Luke sat opposite, kidding him, nodding his bald head sympathetically and stroking his hairy arms.

"I can kick hell out of Walton," Gus said finally.

"Sure you can, he's not so much."

"Well stick around, I'm going to."

"Sid'll be up at the park at the ball game tonight," Luke said.

"Damn the ball game."

"Don't you want to show him up? Don't you want to have a go at him?"

"I'll get him alone when he won't know what hit him."

"Mrs. Walton'll be there too, Gus."

"I'd as lief have a go at her, eh Luke, what do you say?"

Gus drank the whiskey out of a big cup and his long moustache got wet. He left Horton's place sucking his moustache. He hurried back past the lumber yard to his house near Walton's place on the road by the bay. It hurt his head thinking how much he hated Walton. Let him put his hand on a gun and he'd maybe go down to the yard. He wasn't drunk, just feeling pretty good.

He went in the house and came out the back door with the gun. Standing on the porch, he looked over into Walton's place. He didn't hurry back to the yard as he thought he would. He stood on the porch watching Mrs. Walton's big hips and firm back. She didn't speak to Gus because Sid had been having trouble with him but wondered why he wasn't working. She and her six year old Anna were going berry picking. He saw Mrs. Walton take a blue sweater coat from a nail in the porch and Anna brought a pail and two wooden boxes from the woodshed.

Gus went around his side entrance to watch Mrs. Walton going down the road with the kid. He hardly thought about going back to the lumber yard. He sat on the front steps for twenty minutes, his head in his hands, spitting at a bug crawling on the picket walk and thinking about grabbing and hiding the kid that always became Mrs. Walton when he thought about it very much. "That'll make Walton

sweat all right," he thought and got up quickly, happy to go swinging along the road beyond the town to the berry patch in the bush. He thought about stealing the kid but liked following Mrs. Walton. She had full red lips and a lot of black hair bunched over her ears.

Mrs. Walton passed out of sight behind a bunch of girls in automobiles on the road near the wooded picnic park. He hurried. In sight of the line of spruce trees back from the bay, he saw Mrs. Walton help the kid across the plank over shallow Little River and follow the path into the bush.

She kept to the path and he followed through the trees. He got excited gradually. He didn't think much about the kid but thought he would take her away all right.

It was shady yet warm in the bush. The afternoon sun was strong. Brownish green leaves were beginning to fall from the trees on the path. The berry patch was at the south west fringe of the bush. Mrs. Walton walked slowly with a strong stride, her wide brimmed hat flapping regularly. It was warm in the bush and small noises sounded loud but it was cooling to look back through the trees to the blue water line of the bay. Anna sometimes left her mother and played among the trees, hiding behind a big rock, calling to her mother that she couldn't find her. Many huge rounded rocks were in the bush. Gus followed carefully.

The trees thinned out at the fringe of the bush and the berry patch. No one else was berry picking. Mrs. Walton quickly started to work. The berries were black and heavy and fell with a soft little thud in the bottom of the pail. Gus, his side straight against a tree, watched her working, filling the small box then dumping it into the pail close to her right leg. He watched until the pail was nearly three quarters full. The little girl at the bush to the left was filling her box slowly and eating the berries. Gus dropped his coat and stepped from behind a tree, leaning his weight back off his step on the twigs. He thought he wanted to grab the kid but sneaked up behind Mrs. Walton, her shoulder dipping up and down with the picking. He was behind her flinging his arms around her waist, pulling back heavily. The berries sprayed from the box.

"You got to let me have the kid," he said.

She squealed, frightened at first, but seeing and knowing him, she got mad. "Let me go, Gus Rapp, you big fool, just you wait," she said.

Gus said nothing and stopped thinking. He tried to trip and throw her down but she dropped to her knees, gripping hard at his belt and yelling to the girl to run. He banged her on the mouth and leaned forward and down heavily on her shoulders. The kid got as far as a big rock and stood screeching at him.

"You damn kid, shut up," he said.

The woman kicked and scratched so he flopped down smotheringly, jerking her hands from his belt, getting her between his legs. She yelled, "Anna, Anna," but one big hand was on her throat, squeezing. Her clothes ripped and she rolled but he held, hard pressing, bending her stiff back until the kid ran up and got hold of his ankle just above the thick boot, pulling, but his arm swung free and caught the kid by the throat, slamming her down hard, choking her. He tugged and the woman's sweater came away, twisting around and holding her arm. He grunted, "You got to lie there," three times. His legs were thick and heavy and she got weaker. His arms were hard and heavy but she bit deep into his forearm and he hollered, "God damn it," gouging her with his knee. He couldn't hardly hold on and couldn't do anything. She was a big strong woman and the kid was yelling. Snarling, he jerked loose, spinning around and pulling at his gun. He felt crazy and didn't know why he was doing it. In at her he came shooting. He shot three shots, grazing her forehead, gashing her cheek and one went in a log. Then he ran at the kid to stop her yelling, taking her by the neck. Mrs. Walton said not very loud, "Don't kill my little girl," so he shot at the woman to kill but missed. The kid got up and started to run. Gus took a jump at the woman, knocking her over easily, but didn't know what he wanted. He couldn't help thinking what his boss, Sid Walton, would do about it. Mrs. Walton got up. He was scared, but said, "You better lie there." Her skirt was torn and blood was on her leg. He wanted to run away. She

zigzagged through the trees after her girl, pushing the hair out of her eyes and crying softly as she ran. Gus hesitated, watching her, then ran the other way, through the bush and away from the town.

He ran and stumbled through the bush, quite sober and scared, his foot pounding heavily as he banged into little trees, his shaky legs hardly knowing where to go. He wanted to get through the bush to the bay and along the road to the rifle ranges where he could maybe swipe a boat. After running until he was tired, he stopped suddenly and thought it was no use trying. He looked around the bush and down to the bay. Between him and the lakeshore road was a line of trees, branches and tops covered with thick old vines that kids used for tree tag. He climbed a tree to the vines, his feet slashing through green shoots, but the thick springy wood held him. He twined the vines round his legs, resting most of his weight on a branch near the top. The branch swayed and he sweated and cursed and shivered, waiting for the dark. He could look through the leaves up the road and away over the town at the orange sky on the blue mountains, or at the still waters of the bay and the fading skyline.

It got dark and no one came near the tree. He felt better but very stiff and still shaky. It would fool everybody to go back to the town. He slid down the vines and started running, his feet thudding steadily, his breath whistling.

Where the road went back from the shoreline he left it, going down by the waterworks and back of Harvey's fishing station. The big shadow of the wooded picnic park was ahead and he was glad thick clouds were over the moon. The lumberyard was the best place to go because they'd think it a silly place to look. The street lights seemed bright and gave him a funny feeling over the stomach. Maybe he should have gone looking for a box car down at the station but he ran on to the lumberyard. There was no moon and he was sure the lumber was piled too high. He went through the lumberyard and over to the elevator. "The Mississippi" with a cargo of grain was docked. He crawled along the pier but boards were rotten further out

and missing in places. The moon came out and the lapping water underneath the pier scared him so much he lay flat on his belly, breathing drunkenly, trying to pray, "Holy Mary, Holy Mary, Holy Mary, you can do it. I used to go to church, I used to go with the old lady." A light was lit on the Mississippi and then two more. A pain was in his side but he went slinking back along the pier and out again to the lakeshore road. It was a shame having to pass his own house and he thought of the old man sleeping in there.

Gus was surprised to feel hungry. He went along the side entrance of a house with a big verandah and crept into the garden where he pulled carrots and onions, stuffing them into his pockets. The back door opened and in the light he hugged the ground and shivered and puked and lay very still. But the door closed.

He took to the road again, running along trying to eat the carrot and puffing hard. The carrot had a bad taste. He wanted to get around the town and up to the hills. A night bird screeched and his teeth chattered so much he had to drop the carrot. He slowed to a walk.

At a bend in the road near Bell's grocery store he saw a shadow humped at the foot of a lamppost and the hump became a man getting up from the gutter. Two other men came at him and Gus took three jumps forward. "Oh I thought you was a bear," he said. He didn't have a chance to run. One of the men was Walton with his big hands, and John Woods, the constable, and Joel Hurst, the teamster. Gus whined out loud, "Have pity on me." They grabbed hold of him and Woods got ready to slug him, but he slumped loosely in their arms. He said hoarsely, "I don't want to die, Mr. Walton, please Mr. Walton, for Christ's sake." Sid put his hand over Gus' mouth and squeezed until he spluttered and shut up. "Truss the skunk up, boys," he said. They bound his hands and put three ropes around his waist and shoulders, the ropes five feet long, a man at the end of each rope. They twisted the ropes around Gus and the lamppost while Joel Hurst went in the grocery store to phone for the police car. Gus couldn't cry, he was so scared

of Walton. There was a grey streak of light in the sky across the bay.

The Bells and their four kids came out half dressed, forming a circle around Gus. Lights appeared in the windows of other houses. People were hearing that Gus was caught. He leaned his weight forward on the ropes, staring hard at the bat that swooped and darted around the light overhead. The police car came along deliberately and they had no trouble with Gus. The car turned around and as Gus got in the kids yelled and threw pebbles and sticks at him.

LOUIS KRONENBERGER

DIRECTIONS FOR A RENDEZVOUS ON A SUMMER NIGHT

BRING back, with the bright moon and the running tide,
Your small foot over the drowned gold of the beach:
Walk while the chimes fall, waiting the sound of each,
As though it were our hour, and you my bride.
Then, when the night is settled in her pride,
And every bird and bell deprived of speech,
Move on a few more paces, till you reach
Our rendezvous, and find me at your side.

Remember, the silence will be layers deep;
We will not hear the voices of the sea,
Nor any sound of grasshoppers in a lane:
I will not greet you when you come to me,
Only embrace you and draw you down to sleep,
My arms about your body like a chain.

CLARKSON CRANE

HOLIDAY

HE leaned back from his type-writer, and shook his head, trying once more to free his forehead from the tightness that encircled it like a metal band, "or a piece of tape," he thought, remembering how one Sunday he and his wife had walked by tennis courts and seen men playing with white tape around their brows. "Not so tight though," he muttered, "they could take 'em off. The tape 'd come right off." Closing his eyes for a moment, he thought how fine it would be if he could slide his fingers under the tight thing around his forehead and just lift it off; it was no good shaking his head any more. When he did not see, the noises in the office all seemed louder; that chucking in the radiator, Mr. Gorham's fat breathing in the other room, clinking footsteps now and then along the corridor outside, and always the murmurous and faintly clanging emanation from the streets remotely below. Mr. Gorham was calling: "Oh, Mr. Sadler,—Mr. Sadler." He opened his eyes, and saw the big number fifteen popping at him from the calendar on the wall opposite, and answered, "Yes Sir," and walked into the main office. Mr. Gorham, leaning broadly over his desk and pressing sheets of paper with his hand, was making that *sup-sup* noise with his mouth again. "Yes, Sir." The *sup-sup* continued for a while; then Mr. Gorham murmured "Mmmmmmmmm," and revolving in his chair said: "One or two letters I've got to get off. Oh, you've brought your pad with you. Good." Sitting down on the smooth chair with the jagged scratch on one leg, Sadler peeled back sheets of paper, drew out his pencil, shook his head two or three times rapidly, and then looked up, waiting.

"In reply to yours of the tenth instant," began Mr. Gorham, after giving an address, "would like to say that mortgage you speak of—ah—uh, no change that. Say the property to which you refer in yours of the tenth instant—" While Mr. Gorham dictated, Sadler kept thinking of the

man who had sat beside him in the Key Route train that morning, all the way from South Berkeley to the end of the mole, a little thin man with crevices in his dry face and an odor of moth balls coming from him. He had read the *Examiner* most of the time, following the lines across the page with his tiny sharp eyes; but when the train dipped under the Southern Pacific tracks, and then sped out across the dark, stinking mud flat from which the tide had withdrawn, he peered up toward Sadler, twitched the sides of his little nostrils, and exclaimed in a chirpy way: "Gee!" Mr. Gorham, moving in his chair, went on: "My partner is in Los Angeles, but he will return to San Francisco next Thursday or Friday, and if you——" Sadler kept hearing over and over again the slim little chirp. "Gee!" he heard. The man's small nostrils had flickered, and he had said: "Gee!" While he sat there taking down automatically Mr. Gorham's letter, the short word assumed form and a sort of grey-ness and began to pass to and fro across his mind, curving downward and then emerging, then vanishing again, "like a dolphin," thought Sadler, shaking his head. "—and if you happen to be in town, I hope you will drop into my office, as I know the matter can be arranged with a few words, and I should be sorry to have——" Mr. Gorham paused and made "Sup, Sup, Sup," and then asked Sadler to read the last sentence over again. Sadler shook his head and repeated the lines. "That's all right," decided Mr. Gorham. "Finish it off this way."

A peculiar thrundle was in Sadler's brain, the sound made by the feet of many commuters when they walk over the gang plank from the boat into the Ferry building; and right on his forehead, just between his eyes, the little man with the dry face who had sat beside him was dancing up and down, planting his feet one after the other deeply into his skull, and chirping: "Gee! Gee!" He shook his head and blinked.

"What's the matter, Mr. Sadler? Eyes trouble you?"

"No, that's all right."

"Better see an oculist if they do. Wanta look out for your eyes."

Sadler answered in a measured way:

"My—eyes—are—all—right—Mr. Gorham," and noticed that his employer glanced at him quickly and licked his lips two or three times before going on with the letter.

Sadler remembered that he and his wife were going that evening to see Joe and Mary Lengfeld, who lived in a cottage on Grove Street about six blocks across the Oakland line. They would play hearts for an hour or two and then go home, walking up Grove Street and taking an Alcatraz car. On greeting them, Joe would say, as he always did: "Well, what d'yuh know?" and Mary would issue from the kitchen and hold out her hand, still damp and reddish from dishwater, and exclaim: "Hello there, Fred. Awful glad to see you." Sadler rubbed the palm of his hand over his forehead; all the little smells and noises and bits of furniture in Joe Lengfeld's house and in his own pestered him like gnats, flocking into his brain and obscuring the words of Mr. Gorham's letter. "Hoping to see you on your next visit to San Francisco—" Sadler thought that he didn't want to see anyone on his next visit to San Francisco, and the idea seemed so amusing that he chuckled, and Mr. Gorham chuckled too, and said: "Pretty good, eh? I guess that'll hold him."

"Yes," Sadler replied, "that'll hold him."

He wondered why the words he uttered came from Mr. Gorham's personal filing cabinet over there behind the water-cooler, and why they danced across the air like tiny mannikins, waving their hands. When he was back at his typewriter, inserting two white sheets of paper and a sheet of carbon, "like a sandwich," he muttered, he remembered all at once, vividly and curiously, a walking trip he had taken nine years before through an unbroken redwood forest reaching from the Butano Canyon near Pescadero to the Big Basin. It was in July, and he had come to work for Mr. Gorham in August. Nine years ago! The trail ascended gently, penetrating shadowy and green and gold foliage, and a concealed brook sounded quietly beneath broad ferns. He wrote the date, then the address, but when he came to the first line of the letter, he put down a question mark instead of a comma, and had to rub out the ink

and make a correction. The comma and the space above the comma looked fuzzy; last night, for a long time before he went to sleep, the inside of his head had felt just that way, rough, fuzzy, and too large, and he had said to his wife, when she asked him what the matter was: "It's full of bark."

He shook his head, turned away from the typewriter, and stared out of the window for a while; he could see the bay, glinting under the bright sky, and far away, beyond Goat Island, a brown and yellow liner steaming northward. "What's the matter with me?" he thought. Mr. Gorham had given him two letters, and he was sitting now before his machine about to type the first one, the door was over there just where it should be, and the adding machine with its rows of red, black, and white keys was squatting on the table. "I must have eaten something," he thought. He pushed back his chair, arose and walked across the green carpet to the wash-stand, and, having opened the door, filled a glass with water and began to drink. But he saw his thin face and yellow hair in the mirror, and his teeth and open mouth through the bottom of the glass, and it looked so funny, "just like a gold fish in a bowl," that he laughed aloud and set down the glass, choking a trifle on the water he had swallowed the wrong way. "Swimming all around," he thought, as he went back to his typewriter.

The trail in the redwood forest reappeared in his mind. He had intended to go there again, but after his marriage it had grown more and more difficult to take a vacation, and year after year had gone by, and each summer he had said: "I don't need a rest. Feel fine." He started and shook his head. His wife had certainly spoken to him just then. He had answered: "Yeah, Amy?" But she wasn't there. "Come on, come on," he muttered, "don't be a damn fool." And for a quarter of an hour he went on typing, until the long letter was entirely done, with the envelope addressed, and the shorter one half finished.

He got up at six-thirty every morning, and shaved and dressed, and then ate breakfast, and began to read the *Chronicle*, while Amy gave young Jack his mush and tied a

bib around the neck of the little girl. "Look, dear," she always said, "it's half past." He left his house and walked down to College Avenue and caught the Alcatraz car that went by the corner about seven thirty-five. The same men were on the same car. Two or three of them he had seen for nine years, but they never spoke, just sitting there occupied with their papers, or smoking cigars.

Mr. Gorham was calling:

"Oh Mr. Sadler. Oh—ah Mr. Sadler."

Anger suffused him. Why couldn't the man let him finish one letter before troubling him with another? When he went into the inner office, Mr. Gorham smiled and said: "Just one more letter. Sorry to disturb you, Mr. Sadler."

"That's all right," he answered, feeling all at once very humble and clear-headed; the small brass clock on Mr. Gorham's desk was going *tick; tick, tick*; a few papers lay beneath it, sheets that he had typewritten himself a few days before, one afternoon when all these new sensations in his head were just beginning. He sat down and threw back the cover of his pad.

While Mr. Gorham dictated, Sadler thought that he would buy his employer a paperweight for a present next Christmas, so that he would no longer have to thrust papers under the brass clock; Mr. Gorham was a great fellow, as he had often told his wife; he was always glad to give him something, because Gorham had been so kind to him, having helped him out several times with good advice, and more than once with money. There had been one occasion in particular when he had first bought the house and was swamped with obligations. And then even now—. Payments, taxes, insurance, doctor bills. Payments, taxes, insurance, doctor bills. He would never catch up.

"Have you got that down, Mr. Sadler? In case you wish to see Mr. Henshaw personally, I shall be glad to— Mr. Sadler have you got that down?"

Sadler shook his head. "Oh yes, yes. Beg your pardon, I was thinking— I—"

Mr. Gorham cleared his throat.

"You're not looking well today, Sadler. Better leave

that letter till tomorrow and go home early. It's not important."

When Sadler answered, he noticed that his words came from the water-cooler and marched through the air across the room making the same sort of curve that the little man's "Gee" had made when it became grey and pointed like a dolphin.

"I—am—all—right—Mr. Gorham," he replied.

When he left his chair and returned to his type-writer in the other room, he walked on tip-toe in order not to interrupt the brass clock that was ticking away so happily on the large desk. It would be too bad to break in upon its reverie. He heard Mr. Gorham stand up and go over to the window, and soon his employer said: "It's quite hot outside, isn't it? I guess I'll open this a little." As he sat down and prepared to copy the letter, the end of the carbon paper, which was longer than the other sheets, wavered and rustled for a moment in the slight draught that entered.

He made a mistake in the first line and had to rub out an entire word, and, when he had done this, he noticed that he had forgotten to slide a bit of paper under the carbon, and that a dark smudge blurred the second sheet. He became suddenly hot, and felt like hurling the typewriter to the floor, but Mr. Gorham appeared in the doorway, smiling, and his wrath ebbed leaving him calm and polite.

"Air feels good," he murmured, uttering the words from the top of his head, and Mr. Gorham, smiling in his old womanly way, answered: "Mmmmmmm. Yes."

It was curious, Sadler thought, that Mr. Gorham's head, which was ordinarily round with black hair on top, should now be twice as high as usual, and nearly once again as broad; and he was pondering whether or not to tell his employer, when he saw, for the first time, that it was not merely one head, but two of them, and that the second and smaller belonged to the little man who had sat beside him in the Key Route train, and whose "Gee!" had assumed the form and movements of a dolphin. The stench of the mud flat near the Oakland shore crept into the office. He almost exclaimed:

"Hello," wishing to greet the newcomer, but, as he opened his mouth, the man vanished, and Mr. Gorham turned away and walked over to the wash-stand cabinet and drew back the door.

"We need more soap," he said, turning on the water, and Sadler shook his head, bent forward over his typewriter, and answered:

"Yes, we do."

When he looked up again, Mr. Gorham was coming slowly toward him, both hands in pockets, and his wide vest uncovered. Sadler struck three false keys, and a line of punctuation marks trailed across the paper. Groping for the eraser, he heard his wife repeat: "Look, dear, it's half past. Look, dear, it's half past." The stiff band was tightening around his forehead. "Look, dear, it's half past."

He shouted:

"Where's that goddam eraser?"

The typewriter lay on the floor, ribbon detached. When Mr. Gorham, stammering and passing a hand over his face, backed into his office, Sadler followed him through the door, keeping his eyes on the eyes of the little Key Route man who had reappeared over his employer's brow. Extending an arm that seemed four times too long, Sadler took the brass clock from the top of the desk and threw it. The Key Route man had no business there. Mr. Gorham slumped down onto the floor and leaned against his chair, grunting and exclaiming. While Sadler waited, hoping to see the little man come from the waste basket where he had taken refuge, the faint breeze from the open window lifted the sheets of paper that the brass clock no longer held down and pushed them one by one scraping over the smooth wood.

"I'll have to go down stairs after him," thought Sadler at last.

Very carefully, in his usual fashion, he closed the window, pulled down the shades, set the chairs in order, put away the unused carbon paper, took his hat. He did not quite understand why the typewriter lay upturned on the floor; perhaps Mr. Gorham, who still grunted near his desk, wished it so, because tomorrow was Thursday; at any rate, he

didn't care, for he had more important affairs. Descending, he remarked to the elevator boy that the weather was hot. "Yeah," answered the boy. "He came in to see me this afternoon," Sadler went on, "and now I'm going out to look for him. He's a card."

The little man who had said "Gee" was not on the sidewalk near the door, and therefore Sadler walked along Montgomery to California Street, and climbed onto one of the short cable cars, and found a place outside in front beside the grip-man. The hot, blue afternoon sky curved near over the buildings. When the car passed Grant Avenue, rose on its haunches, and mounted the hill, Sadler stared back at the gleaming gold cross on the top of St. Mary's, knowing that the little man might stand there; but the cross shone unoccupied, and Sadler turned to a woman who sat next him and explained: "He will probably be at the Fairmont, because they have dolphins in the lobby." A moment later he added: "No, he's not there. I suppose I'll have to go on to the end of the line."

The woman got off at the next corner and walked away, glancing back at him over her shoulder. It occurred to him that she knew where the little man was.

"Stop!" he cried, leaping onto the pavement.

She halted for an instant, lifting one hand to her face, then vanished around a corner onto Taylor Street. But he saw her again, after a brief pursuit, and commenced to run.

If Mr. Gorham had not asked him to take a fourth letter, he might have paused on reaching her, but he felt so weary that the idea of receiving more dictation was revolting. It would be easy to hide himself among the crowds on Market Street. Going east on Sacramento, he ran along the sidewalk beside the small park, then down the hill beneath the grey Fairmont, and waited on the corner of Powell until a stubby green car appeared on the hill. All the way down to the end of the line he watched the windows of apartment houses and stores, but the little man was nowhere visible, and Sadler all at once knew that the fellow was straddling his neck.

"Take him off me," he cried, springing toward the con-

ductor on the rear platform. "Oh my God, take him off me!"

The conductor opened his mouth. Sadler laughed.

"That's all right. He's not there. I was wrong. He's over at Joe and Mary Lengfeld's house."

It was strange he had not thought of that before. Of course, the little man was over at the Lengfelds. As he walked up Market Street, he felt a rapid yearning to run, and, throwing his hat into the gutter, he cried aloud: "He's a card, Joe, he's a card," and raced forward.

But why did all those branches get in his way? He broke through them, kicking and screaming and clawing; the stream on his left was rumbling and clattering; the forest resounded with the rattle of typewriters, and, as he pushed among the ferns, innumerable sheets of carbon paper brushed over his face and clung to his shoulders. Before his eyes a great green plain tilted and swung, tilted and swung, and something round, large, and velvety balanced on the surface.

He shouted:

"Go to hell, dear, it's half past! Go to hell, dear, it's half past!"

A cluster of gold fish, or perhaps dolphins, swam toward him making *sup—sup—sup* with their mouths. The great velvety, round thing on the tipping plain began to oscillate like a moon, and Sadler put out his hand to keep it from touching the fuzzy hump on the edge. If it touched the fuzzy hump on the edge, Mr. Gorham would never find the soap, and he must find the soap, because he stood there with hands in his pockets, smiling and saying "That air feels good, Mr. Sadler."

The great velvety round thing rolled over and pulled Sadler to the ground and sat upon him, and the fuzzy hump wiggled beneath his cheek like carbon paper, and he heard Joe Lengfeld tell Mary that he was stuck with thirteen hearts. Then the trees of the forest all whirled around him, and when he came forth from under ground, where he had remained a long time in a cave whose walls were pitted with shining particles of crusted light, he wondered why the bay

was so broad and dark and smooth, and why the Key Route ferry boat had been so slow in reaching the other shore. The thrundle of commuters' feet on the gang plank went on interminably through the brass clock, ascending and falling, twisting into spirals and then becoming so grey and fuzzy and thick that his head felt clogged with it all. "Too thick, too thick," he kept telling the man, but the little fellow only grinned and moved his nostrils and chirped "Gee!" and the wide green plain extending miles and miles, far beyond the window, kept tilting and swaying, and now and then it brushed his cheek like carbon paper, so that he shook his head and hoped the great velvety round thing would not touch the fuzzy hump. "Look, dear, it's half past," his wife said, and he rose from his seat in the Alcatraz car and told Mr. Gorham "that'll hold him all right," and Mr. Gorham laughed and opened the window because all the air had run out.

And one day he went back into the cave underground, and walked by the gas furnace in a corner, and wandered for a long time hunting one of the red keys of the adding machine; he had all the white ones and all the black ones, but he could add nothing without the missing red one, and the columns of figures sat by protesting, and every time he found the red key it melted away and the hole where it should have been grew larger and smaller, as if it were swallowing. He hunted for many days in all parts of the cavern, with the California Street cable running beneath his feet, and an odor of moth balls coming toward him in puffs like white bells; and at last he sat down on his typewriter, which lay bottom up on the ground, and commenced to weep, holding his face in both hands. If only those sheets of paper would stop crawling over Mr. Gorham's desk, and if only the cross on St. Mary's wouldn't gleam so into his eyes, then all would be warm and peaceful on the green plain, and the great round velvety thing would never touch the fuzzy hump in the corner. For the distance between them was growing less and less, and the feeling of thickness was becoming so grey that he could no longer hold them apart unless the cross on St. Mary's didn't gleam so into his eyes.

Oh, he must hold them apart, he must hold them apart!

Oh, Mr. Gorham, a man named Lewis came in to see you this afternoon. It's so bright, it shines in my eyes. While he walked down Market Street toward the ferry amid the dense five o'clock crowds, with the big cars clamoring and grinding along beside him, the little man climbed onto his shoulder, and chirped: "Gee," wiggling his nostrils; and the green plain covered with flowers lay under a hot blue sky, and he knew he could go there; for the crevice was still wide enough to allow him to enter. But the great round thing swelled inside his head, pushing a thick, crusty greyness, and Mr. Gorham said: "A little higher," and the cross on St. Mary's flashed into his eyes.

Oh, he must hold them apart, he must hold them apart!

The cross on St. Mary's gleamed wider and wider. The cross on St. Mary's spread golden before his eyes. Oh, hold them apart! The cross on St. Mary's was a clear window with sunlight coming through, and he looked up and said to his wife who was standing above him: "I can't find it anywhere. The adding machine's rotten without it, rotten without it." Then he felt her hand upon his forehead, and lay back, watching the white curtain before the window, and the light dancing in a pitcher of water near the bed.

And soon the green plain returned with the great velvety round thing upon it, and for many years he stole through the cavern, knowing that a letter existed somewhere in the darkness, and that he must type the letter. But one day, he heard his wife say: "I'll give him his breakfast," and he peered up and said: "Is it half past?"

"No, no," she answered, "lie down."

"But I don't want to," he said. "I don't want to. I don't want to. I don't want to."

While he ate breakfast, he looked around the room and saw a small white table at his bedside, with a pitcher of water upon it, and a few small bottles. And the yellow sunlight came through the window and spread over the bedclothes, and outside he could see a square of blue sky. After he had finished eating, he closed his eyes, but he opened them often, and finally there was a shade drawn down over the window, and the electric light was turned on.

All the next morning he lay infinitely weary, and listened to the fog horns braying and crying and hooting. Sometimes, when he felt sleepy, they seemed like the voices of great, uncouth, forlorn animals, but he knew they were fog horns. A nurse was often in the room.

Then one day, when everything was clear, Mr. Gorham came in, and sat smiling near him, and patted his shoulder.

"Feeling better, eh? Fine, that's fine. Going it a bit too strong. Sure, that's all. Need a rest. Everybody does. You'll come back soon. A cousin of mine had a little breakdown last year, but he's as well as ever now. I saw him just the other day on California Street. He looks ten years younger. He's been back in business six months. A few weeks in the mountains 'll put you on your feet again."

Parallel bars of sunlight passed through moving dust particles that glinted now and then. Mr. Gorham talked on for a long time.

When he got up, he patted Sadler on the arm and said:

"You'll be back soon. Sure. You'll be back soon." And, as he went through the door, he turned to Amy: "I was just telling him. He'll be back soon."

Sadler closed his eyes.

MICHAEL GOLD

HOBOKEN BLUES

OR THE BLACK RIP VAN WINKLE

A Modern Negro Fantasia on an Old American Theme

ACT I

THE stage is set as a futurist composition suggesting a corner of Harlem twenty-five years ago. From left to right of stage there are a tenement house, a saloon, an undertaking parlor, and a revival mission hall. Wash lines flap like flags from the tenement, a great goat bock-beer sign stands before the saloon, a wooden Indian before the suggestion of a cigar store, a coffin before the undertaking parlor, and Bible text placards before the gospel mission hall.

Much peasant gaudiness of color in everything. The wash lines must be tremendous rainbow symphonies in underwear and shirts. The goat sign, with a huge B E E R — F I V E C E N T S legend on it, must be the outburst of a crazy colorist. The coffin can be flaming bright, with a black skull and cross bones. The cigar-store Indian is like a van Gogh painting, or even more extreme. The mission hall is an orderly chaos of color and fantasy.

The scene is dynamic, yet with an old-fashioned peasant touch. A child's composition. It would be a calamity to treat the scenes in the play realistically. They must be done by an intelligent futurist like Arthur Dove, Corvarubias, Demuth or Hugo Gellert.

The stage is completely set at the opening curtain for each act—there are no curtains or scene changes between the scenes—the action is continuous. At times scenes will even overlap slightly—there will be an effect of simultaneous planes of action—as in some futurist paintings.

There is nothing esoteric about all this, however—as the play progresses it will all seem simple and inevitable.

NOTE: No white men appear in this play. Where white men are indicated, they are played by Negroes in white caricature masks.

SCENE I

Ecstatic Negro singing bursts from the revival hall for a minute after curtain rises. Then an old burlesque horse-car, pulled by a clown horse, comes clanging from the left. The driver, ACHILLES MCGREGOR, is a short, fat, jolly Negro in a big blue coat and driver's cap, with badge. It is a gaudy, qucer, outrageous and sensational outfit he wears; the artist who has planned the settings must plan the costumes of the play as integral parts of his compositions.

CHILL MCGREGOR (*snapping a fantastic whip*). Whoa, Mike, whoa! Desist! Calm yourself! Cool yo' feet! (*He comes down from platform and goes to horse's head.*) Stop, I tole yo'! (*The horse shies away from him.*) Don' yo' unnerstan' no grammar? Stan' still, Mike, or I'll knock dat cow face of yours down between dem frog legs yo' got! (*The horse bucks.*) Whazzat? Snickerin' at me? No manners, no manners yo' got, Mike. Whah wuz yo' raised anyway, in a stable? (*The horse starts to run; he checks it.*) Wow, honey! Hesitate, O brother! Yo' is rushin' headlong to death and deestruction! Halt! Attention! Retreat! (*He backs the horse; it speeds backward like a cannonball.*) Say, yo' jassack, you is as touch-me-not as pisen ivy!

CONDUCTOR (*an anxious, thin young Negro, sticking his head out from rear platform*). My snakes, Chill, whut's happenin'? Bust somethin' again?

CHILL. No, nuthin's bust, Brother. Dis slewfoot mule of ours is thirsty, dat's all. (*He starts for the saloon.*)

CONDUCTOR. But ain't yo' takin' de water bucket?

CHILL. I'll come back for de bucket, Nigger. I'm thirsty too, ain't I? (*Exit.*)

(*The conductor looks after him gloomily. A little ner-*

vous Negro with large spectacles comes up to him from inside of car.)

LITTLE MAN. Is dis the Reverend Rosewater's revival meetin', Conductor?

CONDUCTOR. Do it sound like a deaf and dumb asylum?

LITTLE MAN. Heah we is, Amelia. (*An immense Negro woman, exuberantly costumed, comes sweating and panting forth.*)

AMELIA. Awready, Henry?

LITTLE MAN. Yop. (*Gets down to help her off.*)

AMELIA (*descending*). Handle me gentle, Henry, yo' knows I bruise freely! (*They walk into revival hall. CONDUCTOR is gloomily counting his nickels.*)

CONDUCTOR. Five, ten, fifteen, twenty—

(*CHILL comes out from saloon, a huge schooner of beer in his hand, and lounges grandly in the doorway with a happy smile. A boy of eight comes running up to him.*)

LIL JOE. Daddy, daddy! I wanten penny fer a lollipop.

CHILL. Lollipops, hay? Yo'll be wantin' beer next, yo' lil plug of terbaccer, you!

(*Bends down and kisses the boy, then comes and takes a nickel out of the conductor's hand, and gives it to him.*)
Heah's a nickel, lil Joe; buy yo'self six lollipops. Easy come, easy go! (*Exit boy.*)

CONDUCTOR. But dat's company money—

CHILL. Company—I'm de company! I'm de grand Treasurer—didn't yo' know dat? (*Starts back for saloon.*)

CONDUCTOR. Whaddle I do now, Chill, wait some more?

CHILL. No, run along, I won't need yo' foh nuther half hour. I have to wait heah foh Sam Pickens. He's been askin' me to find him a job, an' I gotta tell him not to worry. Dere ain't no jobs.

CONDUCTOR. Sam Pickens! Sam Pickens! Dat's what you say every mawnin'! But dey's spotters goin' out today—Chill—it's dangerous.

CHILL (*haughtily*). Tryin' to frighten me, black boy? Heah, turn dat car roun' and drive her down to Hundred-twenty-fifth. Den come back. Shake yo' self, boy. Beat it hence—while yo' have yo' health.

CONDUCTOR. Kain't yo' see Sam ter-night, stead of now—we ain't hardly begun workin' ter-day.

CHILL (*indignantly*). My gravy, boll weevil, yo'll get me peevisish, yo will. Workin', workin'—ain't I worked three hours awready—an' ain't dat a good full day's work, accordin' to de bes' philosophers? Yo' theories is all wrong, Lucius. Yo' ain't studied dese things. Don' you know too much work is brutalizin' unto man? Heah, turn her roun' and git. Giddap, Mike!

CONDUCTOR (*gloomily taking up reins, and almost weeping as he drives*). But I seen spotters— (*Exit.*)

CHILL. On yo' way, peanut, on yo' way. Lawd, de most frightenest conductor I ever carried. Ought join de street-cleaners, he ought. Dat's a job for work hawsses like him. (*He leans back luxuriously against saloon and sings part of the Boll Weevil song, stopping at one of the verses to sip some beer. Down the steps of the tenement at left of stage comes SALLY PICKENS, a young, vigorous woman with head wrapped in red bandanna, followed by her husband, SAM, a lanky, badly-dressed, sheepish good-for-nothing. CHILL sees them, and stops his song.*)

CHILL. Mawnin', Sam. Mawnin', Sally. Sam, I wuz jest waitin' roun' fer yo'. Got some news of a job.

SAM. Aw right, Chill, allers ready to discuss business. (*Anxiously*) Kin I talk to him fer a few minutes, Sally?

SALLY. No. (*Folds her arms belligerently.*) No—n-no—NO. You played this trick too offen. Chill McGregor, what yo' doin' wid dat beer?

CHILL. Beer? (*Looks at it in surprise.*) I dunno; jes happened in mah hand.

SALLY (*at a fearful, shrew's pace*). Yes, jes happened! One of dem accidents, like gittin' run over by a locomotive train, ain't it? Yop, jes' accidently happenin' to be boozin' and swillin' beer again, ain't yo, an' loafin' on de cahs and takin' de bread out of de mouf of yo' poor wife and chillen! Hoss-cah philosopher yo' call yoself, but I knows yo', Chill McGregor, jes a good-for-nuthin', lazy, no-count, triflin' bum, dat's what yo' are, jes like mah husband heah, what ain't done a day's work fer eight years! I knows yo', both

of yo'; jes' wolves in sheep's clothing; but de Lawd'll have his jedgement on yo'; dere's hell-fiah burnin' fer lazy Niggahs, praise Gawd, sho' as snuff! Why don't yo' do some-thin', yo' red-eyed rang-a-tang? Why done yo' say some-thin'?

CHILL (*his beer-glass trembling in his hand*). Gawd Amighty!

SALLY. Is dat all yo' got to say? Whah yo' left yo' poor hawsses, anyway? Go back to work, yo' shifless good-fer-nawthin' man! Come along, Sam!

CHILL (*more fervently*). Gawdamighty!

SALLY (*tugging at SAM's sleeve impatiently*). Why ain't you comin', Sam? Ain't paralyzed, is yo'?

SAM (*mournfully*). Sally, can't you see I'm thinkin'?

SALLY (*exploding*). Thinkin'? Thinkin'? Thinkin' of beer, dat's what you're thinkin' 'bout. Come along.

SAM. Sally, we gotter be practical, ain't we? We gotter be thinkin' bout ourselves, ain't we?

SALLY (*interested despite herself*). What you mean?

SAM. Well, lookyheah. Let's 'spute dis proposition a minute. Whah yo' leadin' me dis minute?

SALLY. You know whah I's leadin' yo', all righty. I's leadin' yo' by de hand to de Lawd Gawd and religion. I's takin' yo' to de Reverend Rosewater's revival meetin' to redeem yo' fum yo' shiflessness, and banjo-playin' and beer-guzzlin'. Yo' gonner get preached at and prayed at dis mornin', Sam Pickens; dat's whar I'm leadin' yo'.

SAM. Eggsackly. Dey gonner preach at me and pray at me. You 'rranged dat. But whaffor dey gonna preach at and pray at me? Tell me dat.

SALLY. To bring yo' up to de mourners' bench, a-weepin' and wailin' fo' yo' sins. To send yo' out white as snow ter stop yo' monkeyshines, and ter look fer a job.

SAM (*triumphantly*). Dat's it, dat's it! Dat's whar I say, less be practical, 'n save a lotter of time. I don't haffter have Reverend Rosewater tell me mah sins. I knows all 'bout dem, Sally, and I knows I done wrong to yo'. I heahwith an' hencefowahd repent. I ain't got no pride 'bout it; I ain't gonner hide nawthin'; I kin acknowledge heah and

now, widout de Reverend Rosewater, dat I've been kinder of lazy an' shiffless. Now dat's dat. I'm repented and out lookin' fer a job. An' heah's Chill McGregor what has got a job ter tell me 'bout. Why can't I begin lookin' fer it, right away, 'stead of wastin' de mornin' in revival meetin'? Ain't I right, Chill? We gotter be practical, Sally, or—

SALLY (*arms on hips, and glaring terribly*). You wuthless hound! Yo' shuffle-footed hunk of midnight and alligator bait! Tryin' ter crawl out again, ain't yo? Think yo're so smaht, takin' lessons in smahtness fum dis hoss-cah philosopher, ain't yo? No, suh, yo' ain't goin' ter spend de mawnin' in de beer saloon with Chill McGregor, like yo' spent so many mawnin's. Dat's what yo're hankerin' for, but yo's comin' right along with me! Yo' heah dat, yo's coming wid me; right dis second! An' ketch dis in yo' pipe; ef I evah see you neah Chill McGregor again, a-getting spiled by him for honest wuhk, I'll wham de both of yo'; I'll knock yo'; dat's what I'll do; I'll deface yo'. Now come an' git saved, Niggah. (*She grabs SAM's hand; but he ducks away, SALLY in pursuit.*)

SAM. Sally, I—

SALLY. Don't Sally me. (*Chases him.*) Whar yo' duckin' to? O, yo' aggravatin' wile-cat! Come along, I tell yo', and git saved! What yo' laffin' at yo' hoss-cah bum? Why don't you help me ketch him? Heah, stand still, Sam Pickens! Now git in dar; shake yo'self! Don't wriggle no moh; yo' jes has gotter git saved dis mawnin'. Git! Git! Git! (*She finally wrestles SAM into the revival hall, SAM casting a long anguished look backward at CHILL.*)

SAM (*before he disappears*). Gawdamighty!

CHILL (*mopping his brow and taking a deep desperate draught of the beer after they have disappeared*). Gawdamighty! (*He hurries to saloon door excitedly, and calls out.*) Barney! (*A respectable-looking, middle-aged bartender in white apron comes to door.*) Barney, dat she-stal-lion of Sam Pickens' wuz jest heah, and give Sam an' me a bawlin'-out would blister de hinges of hell. Whew!

BARNEY. She's de champeen of dis neighborhood, dat gal is!

(*Three men appear back of him, with beer schooners in their hands. They are JEFF ADAMS, a flashy, yellow-faced race track sport; KID MUMBO, a stocky little prize-fighter in bright sweater and derby hat; and HANK SPIVEY, an ice-man in overalls, smoking a corn-cob pipe.*)

JEFF ADAMS. Whut's she doin' ter Sam now?

CHILL (*growing very excited*). Doin'? Doin'? She's drug him into de revival, and Reverend Rosewater's gonna preach at him and pray at him wid de congregation.

BARNEY. Whaffor?

CHILL. Ter make him go ter work.

ALL (*with deep horror*). Gawdamighty! (*They drain their glasses.*)

BARNEY (*with deep conviction*). It can't be done.

CHILL. Dat's what I tried tuh inform her; her theories is all wrong, an' I coulda demonstrated it by history, but she wouldn't lissen to me. Whew! Gimme half a dozen beers, Barney; I gotter cool off. I'm gonna wait around till Sam comes back, ef he ever does.

BARNEY (*solemnly*). Dat's de kind of wimmen dat drives good men to drink.

ALL. Gawdamighty! (*They drain their glasses, and sing a quartette song, then go back into saloon.*)

SCENE II

Before they have disappeared, and while they are still singing, a fat policeman in the helmet and skirted coat of 1900 ambles lazily across the stage. He goes to the side door of the saloon, knocks twice, and a big glass of beer is handed out to him, which he drinks with luxurious gestures. The singing stops; a hurdy-gurdy off-stage begins playing "Sweet Rosie O'Grady." He calls for another schooner, and sips more slowly at it. An old woman has come on the stage, hobbling on a stick and muttering strangely. It is GRANNY PICKENS, SAM's mother. The hurdy-gurdy trails into distance.

GRANNY PICKENS. Whar kin he be? Whar's mah lil Sammy-boy? Dey ain't gwine kill him, too, is dey, lak dey

killed his brother? (*Looks frantically about her.*) Dey come in de dahk night. Dey cotch him foh mah eyes, mah lil Jim-boy, and dey buhn him foh mah eyes. At de hitchin'-post dey buhn him. Oh, whuf-foh dey drag me back when I rush in de fiah to save mah lil Jim-son? I seed his skunt-off face and his bloody mouf whah dey hit him. My Jim, mah black innercent babe! And now dey comin' foh mah Sam! Sammee! Sam Pickens! Yo' mammy lookin' foh you! (*She calls, and shuffles about, searching. The policeman hears, hands back his empty beer glass, and steps out to meet her in her slow hobble across the stage.*) Sammee-boy!

POLICEMAN. Good mawnin', Granny Pickens. Ain't lookin' foh Sam again, is yo'? Case he's all right; I seed him jes' a minute ago.

GRANNY PICKENS. You seed him? Is you sartin'?

POLICEMAN. Yop, sartin, suah as I'm standin' heah.

GRANNY PICKENS. Case I seed a bunch of white men standin' and whisperin' at de corner. Dey comin' foh mah Sam, Mr. Policeman. Dey'll stand an' whisper till de dahk night; den dey'll come foh him, lak dey come foh mah lil Jim-boy.

POLICEMAN (*soothingly*). No, dey won't; dose white men ain't up to no hahm, Granny Pickens; dey only some sewing machine salesmen. I'll watch foh yoh, Granny Pickens; no hahm'll come to Sam.

GRANNY PICKENS. But he ain't done nuthin', mah lil Sam-babe. Whaffo dey after him, dem cruel white men? (*Policeman starts walking her off the stage.*)

POLICEMAN. Dat's all right, Granny Pickens; you jes go home and rest yo' mind; I'll take care of Sam foh yo'. Nuthin's gwine happen on mah beat like in Alabam; dis is Noo Yawk, Granny Pickens, Harlem, Noo Yawk. (*Exit both.*)

SCENE III

(*The hurdy-gurdy switches for a moment to "A Hot Time in The Old Town Tonight" then trails off entirely.*)

The doors of the revival meeting open, revealing a room-full of earnest, sweaty men and women. The REV. ROSEWATER is on the platform. On the back seat, near the door, are the fat woman, AMELIA, and her little husband; likewise SAM and SALLY. SAM is at the farthest end near the door, and casts yearning glances outward toward freedom. The chorus of a hymn is sung.)

SALLY (*shaking SAM in the lull after the hymn, and hissing venomously*). Now you stay put, Sam Pickens, and don't wriggle so!

(*Harlem's popular undertaker, MISTUH BUTLER, a tall, pompous, respectable person in a frock coat, rises to testify. He is a little staid compared to the fervent ones who follow; but piously noisy enough.*)

MR. BUTLER (*his eyes rolling to the ceiling*). An' I wuz, an' is, an undertaker, O Lawd. An' I laid out many a corpse in death, but I wuz a sinner jest the same, Lawd. I gambled, drunk, cussed, and used fowil langwidge in Thy sight, Lawd. Thou knowest well what I wuz in dem days, Lawd, but Thou give me time to repent. An' de day come when I wuz wuhkin' on a corpse in my undertakin' parlors cross de way, and I wuz thinkin' of wimmen and cards, not of Death. (*Shouts of Amen! Hallelujah! Dat's de truth!*) An' den suddenly I seed de Angel of Death in mah undertakin' parlor, standing right among de boxes. An' he said, Mistah Butler, thou are a proud man and a well-to-do undertaker, but thou are flesh too. Thou time will come too. No more breath will heave in thy breast than in dis corpse, thy hands'll be cold and empty, and thy old feet'll be turned east and thy old head turned west, and thou will be a box of cold meat, like thy own cash customers, Mistuh Butler. So I got scared an' seed de Light at once, and turned Christian, and I been a Christian ever since, praise de Lamb.

(*Shouts and hallelujahs from the congregation, and a hymn—all a little staid and restrained, however, for the undertaker, while a pious man, is a wet blanket on enthusiasm.*)

SALLY (*nudging SAM*). Now you git up and testify.

SAM (*desperately*). Later, Sally, later. (*He licks his dry lips.*)

AMELIA (*springing up*). Dat's all right, Sister, I'll take de floor now. (*She begins testifying in a high, hysterical voice that raises the congregation to a similar hysteria.*) Comin', mah Jesus, comin' to Thee, mah blessed Saviour. Comin' fer mah white robes and golden crown. I's saved! No more lyin', no more back-bitin', no more 'busin' mah poor lil husband, like I useter, Jesus. (*A shout; Dat's de truth, Lawd!*) No more thinkin' and hankerin' and honin' foh evil pleasures wid men, O Jesus; you's enough, O Jesus, jes wantin' you! I's cured. I uster suffer fum rheumatism, but you cured dat. I useter suffer fum gas in de stomach. (*A shout; Praise Gawd.*) But you cured dat. I useter suffer fum piles an' everything, but now you's cured me; I'm washed white in de blood; and I's comin' on a white hawss to see mah Jesus in heaven, an' to set by his side. I's gwine tuh leap right up tuh yo' now! (*She tries to leap; a shout: Go it, Sister!*) I'm gonna jump and leap till I reach mah Jesus. I'm gonna do a jungle dance up and down, jumpin' and hollerin', till I jump to Jesus. Nuthin' gonna hold me down; dis wicked flesh ain't gonna hold me down; I'm gonna jump and leap to mah Jesus!

(*She is jumping and leaping and singing violently, and the others are infected and follow her. In a moment there is wild singing, groaning, dancing which forms into the pattern of a savage bacchanal in Africa. SALLY joins in, and forces SAM to his feet, too. Pandemonium for some time; then it settles.*)

REV. ROSEWATER (*mopping his brow with relief, for he has been jumping, too*). Well, breddern and sistern, wasn't dat a wunnerful testimony, now? Better dan any show in a playhouse; yes-suh. Dere's moh amusement in Jesus dan in all de wickedness of de world. You're a big woman, Sister Wineglass, but yo' kin suttinly leap when de Lawd sends de spirit inter yo'. An' he set de congregation leapin' and jumpin', too, praise His name. Now, is dey any odder testifiers and leapers to Jesus? How 'bout yo' back there, Deacon Gibbs! How 'bout yo' Brudder Pickens? We'd 'specially like tuh heah from Brudder Pickens, 'cause we all know he's got a lot tuh answer for.

(SAM *shuffles his feet, and wears an agonized look. SALLY urges and whispers fiercely to him. The congregation turns around to stare at him. SAM licks his lips. Then an old man gets up painfully.*)

REV. ROSEWATER (*disappointed*). Ah, ole Daddy Jake wants tuh testify. Good foh yo', Daddy, go ahead; we'll come to de odder brudder later. Go on, Daddy, don't git scared.

DADDY JAKE (*bashfully*). Not much good at testifyin', me, O mah Jesus.

REV. ROSEWATER. Go on Daddy; He'll heah yo'; talk to Him!

DADDY JAKE. Massah Jesus, dis is me, old Jake. I know I's good-fer-nuttin'—jes a poor ole black Niggah, but de Book say you know all about de lil sparrows, so I guess you won't forgit me, neither.

VOICE. Dat's right, Daddy.

DADDY JAKE. No, I'll talk to yo', Jesus, 'case I ain't afraid no mo' like I useter be. Nuttin' kin huht me now—seems like—sometimes—de grabe'll be mighty sweet—(*He begins to sob, and the others encourage him to go on.*)

VOICE. Talk wid him, Daddy!

ANOTHER. He ain't gwine forgit yo'!

ANOTHER. Jesus know yo', Daddy.

DADDY JAKE (*wiping his eyes*). Not afraid tuh die, Jesus, case I'm so tired of dis-yer wuhld. I done wuhked so hahd all mah life, Jesus. When I wuz a slave I wuhked ebbery single day fum sun-up to sun-down. An' de white man beat me wid stones and sticks an' clubs an' sich, an' I wuz bleedin', and evah sorrowful. Den I wuz a freeman, and dey wuhked me jes as hahd, and dey beat me, too. Allers beatin' de black man, Jesus, why de white man beat us so? I'm tired, Massa Jesus, and when I git to heaben I'm gonner res'. I'm gonna take mah shoes off and res' foh a long, long time. An' no one'll beat me in heaven, and dey won't be no black man or white buckrah dere. I'll lay on a white counterpane bed in heaven, and take off my gold shoes, and jes res'. An' no one'll beat me. An' no one'll call me niggah. An' I'll have nuff to eat—chicken and okra and sweet pota-

toes and milk. Yessuh and honey an' de Lawd's good red watermelon . . . (*He sobs again, then sings in a high, feeble voice*)

"I was a helpless Negro boy
That wandered on the shore,
Thieves stole me from my parents' arms,
I never saw them more."

(*He breaks down.*)

REV. ROSEWATER. Dat'll do now, Daddy Jake. You done talk wid Jesus good. Say Amen now.

DADDY JAKE. Amen. (*He sits down, wiping his eyes.*
THE REV. ROSEWATER *now comes forward, and rolls up his sleeves slowly and significantly.*)

REV. ROSEWATER. Any furdur testimonies? Is we or isn't we going to git any more testifications? Don't none of de breddern and sistern wanten spit out de truth ter Jesus? It's yo' last chance, breddern and sistern, case I've rolled up my sleeves, an' I'm goin' ter grab yuh foh de Lawd, I'm gonner yank yo' out of de lake of sin, a-wrigglin' up to dis bench, a-weepin' and a-wailin' and a-gnashin' of your teeth. No moh testimonies? No? (*Everyone is frightened; there is a little stir, but no one has the courage to rise.*) No-buddy? No? Less sing a hymn, den. (*They sing a lively hymn—something like Ole Ark's a Moverin. Then the REV. ROSEWATER suddenly hits the Bible an awful wallop on his desk.*)

REV. ROSEWATER. Dat's de Book—de Book of Books. (*Points upward.*) An' up dere's Heaben, cordin' to de Book. (*Stamps on the floor and looks downward.*) And down dere's Hell, cordin' to de Book. Now, sinners, I wants to ask yer pussonily, where you going, up or down? Case yo' ain't gonna escape if you're sinners fum down dere—de fiah is bein' kept all nice an' hot foh yo'—lil debbils shovellin' coal—Lucifer spillin' on de kerosene an' de Debill hisself blowin' wid de bellows, whush, whush! All fer sinners! Yo' gwine roast dere, an' sizzle dere, an' fry dere, forevah and evah, ef yo' don't repent: dat's what de Book say, breddern and sistern. (*Pounds the Bible again.*)

WOMAN'S VOICE. Tell 'em brudder! Tell 'em!

VOICES. Hallelujah! Amen! Glory!

REV. ROSEWATER. Yo' like burlesque shows, and dancin' and wimmen, and beer-drinkin', but what good it gwine do yo' in hell? No winter and no summer dere—eternal hell-flame—jes blisterin', roastin', fryin', sizzlin', kind of climate—yo' won't sweat—yo won't melt—yo'll jes suffer an' suffer. Yo'll reach up fo' a glass of water and God'll put down his foot like dis—(*Stamps*) and push yo' back in de lake of fiah. An' yo'll moan and yo'll groan an' yo'll holler and yo'll weep, but 'twon't do you no good—yo' sinners who missed yo' chance on earth, and wouldn't repent.

WOMAN'S VOICE. Tell 'em brudder, tell 'em.

VOICES. Send de spirit, Jesus. Amen. Praise Gawd.

REV. ROSEWATER. Come up, sinners, befoh it's too late. De Lawd knows yoh names. He's keepin' books on yoh, so yo' can't escape nowhow. Come up to de mohner's bench, and fess up yo' sins. Come up, come up. I knows all of yo', and yo' ain't gwine dodge me. I gits what I want when I want it. Don't make out yer innercent—I got tabs on all of yo'. Dere's Deacon Gibbs settin' right dar amongst yo'. Ef de good Lawd wuz to come down dis yer minit and look in dat Niggah's britches pocket, he'd find dem bones what de Deacon loves to shake better'n he love de Blessed Light. Yes, breddern and sistern, dice is Deacon Gibbs' besettin' sin. Come up, Deacon, come up!

(A man stumbles up and sits down heavily on the mourners' bench, rolling his eyes.)

And now dere's Brudder Jones. He sets in de Amen corner same as a coon in a holler stump, fat and sassy as a possum in summer time, and he yells Amen louder dan anyone in de congregation—he's a strong Amen-er. But jes de same he's gwine ter have eleven beers and lust after two dozen wimmen foh he gets home ter-night; come up, brother, come up! (*He comes up beside the Deacon.*) Den dere sits Sister Pheby; to be sho' she's a big church member, but ain't she a-gwine heah and a-gwine dere, a-totin' of tales, and makin' a quarrel betwix dis-yer an' dat-yer man, and his wife? An' ain't she jealous of Sister Wineglass, cause Sister Wineglass got a

louder voice in de hymn singing and a lot more power in her testimonies? Come up, sister Pheby, come up. (*The sister comes up.*) An' now we git after one we ain't influenced yet. His wife ask me to save him, and I knows it's gwine be hahd job, but I want yo all to help. It's Brudder Pickens. We all gonna pray dat he see de Light and go out lookin' foh a job, case he's de laziest man in Hahlem. (*Shouts: Amen! Praise Gawd!*) Yes, suh, de laziest man in Hahlem, an dat's de shinin' truth. (*The fat woman: a long, fervent Hallelujah!*) Ain't wuhked foh eight yeahs, he ain't, he's a rough-an-tough, high-fed Niggah, he is, an' he say he ain't gonner wuhk or sweat foh no one cep he slips up. Yes, yes, he been sleepin' in sin foh eight yeahs like Rip Van Winkle, an' nuthin' but hell-fiah's gonna wake him up. Hell-flames, sizzlin, burnin' and roastin' him through eternity! (*Moaning and groaning of the congregation.*) Sister Pickens wash clothes and wuhk in laundries, and scrub floors, an' she's fat as a match. But Brudder Pickens loaf about saloons, and plays de banjo, and sleeps till noon, and does nuttin' but sing and eat and res' easy, and he skinny as a hog in clover. But it's be odder way round in de Lawd's hereafter. (*Groans and hallelujahs.*) He'll be the skinny one, she de fat one. She gwine to get fat on milk and honey in Jerusalem, he goin' to sweat hisself clean to de bone in hell. You heah dat, brudder. Why don't you come up? Come up, brudder, come up. (*SALLY and SISTER WINEGLASS push at SAM, but he clings desperately to the bench.*) I see he's a hahdheart; nuthin' won't soften him. He don't fear de hot griddles of hell. Les pray for him. Git on yo' knees all of yo' and pray hahd. (*They get on their knees, moaning and wailing*) O Lawd, save Sam Pickens fum de buhnin'. Soften his heart. (*Shouts, wails and moaning*) Git him out of his evil triffin' beer-drinkin' ways. Whut's de use of it all, Brudder Pickens—jes foh a lil pleasure heah on earth, is yo' gwine give up yo' chances foh a harp an' crown? He's the scandal of the neighborhood, Lawd, an' he knows it! Git him up heah beatin' his chest, and weepin' and groanin' and promisin' to look fer wuhk. Come up, brudder, come up. Soften your heart! De Lawd's givin' yo'

another chance. Jesus is waitin' foh yo'; de angels has stopped deir harp-playin' and is waitin' for anuther minute. Dey got milk and honey all set out fer yo'; but down dere in hell the flames is whisslen, and de Devil's laffin' and wuhkin his bellows! Et's yo' las chance—don't yoh heah Gabriel's horn? Come up, brudder, come up.

(Groaning, screaming, singing, and then suddenly SAM looks about him wildly for a second, and crawls out of the door on his hands and knees. Outside he looks about him again and darts through the back door of the saloon and disappears.)

REV. ROSEWATER *(opening his eyes and looking around)*. Ain't yo' soft yet, brudder? Sister Pickens, why ain't he comin'—Sister Pickens!—Whar de brudder go?

SALLY *(opening her eyes)*. Oh, de yaller dog! He's snuk out!

REV. ROSEWATER. Snuk out? Snuk out of a revival meetin'?

(The congregation leaps to its feet, murmuring and shouting in amazement.)

VOICES OF CONGREGATION.

Snuk out!

Sam Pickens!

Shifless, triflin' man!

Laziest man in Harlem!

Gwine to hell, suah!

Poor Sally Pickens!

Scandalizin' man!

Hallelujah! I'm saved, anyway!

REV. ROSEWATER. Don't git alarmed, breddern and sistern; he's snuk outa heah; but he ain't gonna sneak outa hell as easy. Less sing. *(He strikes up into a hymn; all join in; AMELIA WINEGLASS, the fat sister, puts her arms about SALLY and tries to console her, but SALLY breaks free and rushes out of the hall. She looks wildly about her outside, as the revival hall doors shut behind her. Then she goes to the saloon and pushes in the doors, revealing the same men as before drinking quietly at the bar.)*

SALLY. Did Sam come heah? Where dat pizen-weed man?

BARNEY. Never seed him once dis mawnin, Sally.

SALLY (*screaming*). Yo're a liar! Gawd damn yo' all, anyway, foh a bunch of wuthless saloon skunks! (*She dashes off; the men shake their heads in terror, utter the word "Gawdamighty!" and drain their glasses as doors close on them again. SALLY darts one way and the other, searching for SAM, then she rushes up the tenement stoop, and into her home, where she drops on the bed and sobs bitterly. The orchestra breaks into the hymn last sung by the revivalists; and then a curtain falls and shuts SALLY from view.*)

SCENE IV

(*A minute's intermission, while the orchestra plays lively hymn tunes. It stops; a short pause, and the hurdy-gurdy breaks into a few bars of Tammany. As it trails away LIL JOE and HONEY LOU come skipping around the corner, humming the tune. They sit on the stoop and suck at lollipops.*)

LIL JOE (*about eight years old*). My daddy is got a good job. He's a hoss-cah driver, and he kin get all the nickels he wants ter, free.

HONEY LOU (*about seven*). Yair, but daddy kin play the banjo, so there.

LIL JOE. I'm gonner be somethin' big when I grow up.

HONEY LOU. I'm gonner play the banjo.

LIL JOE. I ask daddy for a penny for lollipops, and he gives me a nickel always.

HONEY LOU. My daddy sings for me.

LIL JOE. My daddy talks. Say, Honey Lou, less you an' me git married when I grow up and am somethin' big.

HONEY LOU (*complacently*). Aw right. An' less have cleven hundred children.

(GRANNY PICKENS *comes by muttering.*)

GRANNY PICKENS. Has you chillen seen my Sam? Where's yo' daddy, Honey Lou?

HONEY LOU. We ain't seed him, Granny. We's lookin' foh him, case he promised to buy me a pony, an' a big red fire-in-jin, an de Brooklyn Bridge—

GRANNY PICKENS (*muttering vaguely*). No, dem white men ain't up to no good. Dey still standin' round de corner, waitin' foh mah Sam-boy. Don't let no white men tetch you, chillen. Run upstairs ef dey come by. Dey came in de dark night and bu'nt him at de hitchin' post. De fiah, de fiah, de fiah, bun't up his flesh. He screamed foh his mammy—his mammy. Mah Jim-son, mah black innercent babe. (*She hobbles out, wiping her eyes.*)

LIL JOE. Did yoh Daddy reely say he wuz goin' buy you a pony?

HONEY LOU. Yop, a nice little white one.

LIL JOE. Lemme ride on it, Honey Lou?

HONEY LOU. Yop, but nobody else. An' I'll let you walk on my Brooklyn Bridge, and go to fiah on my fiah injin, but I won't let you play on my gold piano.

LIL JOE. Is you daddy gittin yo dat, too?

HONEY LOU. Sure; my daddy kin do anything.

LIL JOE. I'll change yo' lollipops. (*They exchange and are sucking.*) Les look for yo' daddy, Honey Lou. (*They sit on the steps*) After we git through suckin' dese.

SCENE V

(MISTUH BUTLER and his boy OSWALD come out of the revival hall—OSWALD is about the same age as the other children; but is better dressed.)

BUTLER. Now, Oswald, I gotta customer to embalm, an' I want yo' to come along and watch me.

OSWALD. I don't wanna. I don't like embalmin'. I git frightened.

BUTLER. You foolish chile, dey ain't nuthin' to git frightened about. Dem folkses is all dead, and can't hahm you no moh. Yo' gotta learn de business fum de ground up.

OSWALD. I don't wanna learn no business.

BUTLER. But who gonna take my place when I'm old? Who gonna carry on my undertakin' parlors when I'm gone? You, ain't it?

OSWALD. Yair.

BUTLER. Well, you gotta learn some time, ain't yo'? Yo' learned some religion dis mawnin'; now yo' gotta learn some business; de two travels hand in hand.

OSWALD. But I wanna play.

BUTLER. Play, play? You knows what happens to children who plays, an nevah learns. Dey grow up into hoss-cah drivers. Come along, now.

OSWALD. But I wanna play.

BUTLER (*impressively*). Honor thy father, Oswald, that thy days may be long in de land of thy birth an' activity. Don't de Good Book say dat, Oswald?

OSWALD. Yair, but I wanna play. (*Sobs.*)

BUTLER (*bitterly*). Go ahead den and play, an' grow up into a hoss-cah driver; ef yo' wants to. (*He starts for his undertaking parlor.*) But don't get yo' Eton collar all dabbed up. And don't play wid no common trash chillen, Oswald. (*Exit.*)

OSWALD (*comes over to the children*). Gimme a suck, Lil Joe.

JOE. No, buy yo' own lollipops.

OSWALD. Awright, but bet I got somethin' yo' ain't got.

JOE. I don't care. (*Goes on sucking.*)

OSWALD (*more boastfully*). Bet I got somethin' yo' ain't got—somethin' big.

JOE. Don't believe him, Honey Lou.

HONEY LOU. I will so believe him, ef I wanna. What is it you got, Oswald; tell me.

OSWALD (*proudly*). I got religion, dat's what I got. I got it dis mawnin'.

JOE. Aw, dat ain't nothing. Anybody kin get dat—les go look foh yoh daddy, Honey Lou.

OSWALD. Yair, come on. (*He takes her hand.*) I'll find yo' daddy foh you.

(*The hurdy-gurdy breaks into a few bars of Tammany.*)

HONEY LOU (*taking his hand, and springing up*). Ooh, less go an' dance some more—den we'll find my daddy and ask him for de pony.

OSWALD (*skipping off with her*). I gotta keep my collar clean, though.

JOE (*following sullenly*). Anybody kin git religion—anybody. Religion ain't nothin'. I'd rather have a nanny goat and a cart. (*Exit.*)

SCENE VI

(*The music stops. The saloon doors open. The men at the bar are singing Tammany, and waving their beer-schooners in time to it. Suddenly SAM PICKENS appears from the side, and looks about him like a hunted man.*)

ALL. Here's Sam Pickens.

SAM. Is she gone?

BARNEY. Holy cats, whar yo' come frum, Sam?

SAM. I wuz hidin' in de family entrance. Is she gone?

BARNEY. Yop, lucky fo' you, too.

SAM (*mopping his brow*). Whew, Barney, gimme a glass of beer, will you'? Pay yo' nex' week, when my ship comes in. (*Drinks long and luxuriously.*) Mm-mm copesetic—I needed dat drink.

BARNEY. She's suah sore at you dis mawnin' ain't she, Sam?

SAM (*sadly*). She suah is. Wish I wuz dead.

BARNEY. Wuz dey reely all preachin' and prayin' at yo'? How did it feel?

KID MUMBO. Why didn't yo' bust dat preacher in de jaw?

SAM. Aw, what's de use of reminderin' all about it?

BARNEY. But what did they do? Tell us, Sam.

HANK SPIVEY. Sure, we wanna hear.

JEFF ADAMS. Tried to make you go to wuhk, didn't he, the dirty dog?

SAM (*mournfully*). Aw, what's de use? Dey got me in hell; and dat's where I belong, maybe. Where's Chill?

BARNEY. What yo' want him for?

SAM. He promised to tell me 'bout a job he's got foh me.

BARNEY. You ain't really lookin' for a job, Sam? Why, Sam, I am absolutely decimated wid surprise. Dis is so sudden.

(*The others laugh heartily, and slap SAM on the back.*)

SAM. Don't joke at me, Barney: I gotter find a job dis time. Where's Chill, anyway? (*Looks around*) What, he ain't buffleheaded so early in de mawnin'? (*He has seen CHILL snoring in a chair.*)

BARNEY. Yop, he's all lit up, an' he's been philosophizin' like a house afire. De tings and books dat man don't remember when he gits a dozen beers into him. He's a whole cyclopedia, he is!

SAM (*painfully*). But he promised to tell me 'bout a job. Dat's why I come heah. I guess I'd better wake him, hey, Barney?

BARNEY (*chuckling*). Go ahead an' try. Chill's a powerful sleeper.

SAM (*shaking the horse-car driver*). Chill! Chill! Wake up! I wants to ask yo' 'bout dat job. Wake up, Chill! (*CHILL snores more loudly.*)

JEFF ADAMS. Trow a glass of beer in his mouth—dat'll wake him.

SAM. He musta had a gallon of beer to make him sleep so. Hey, Chill! (*shouts.*) Chill, oh, Chill! Wake up!

CHILL (*opening his eyes, dreamily*). Whut is it, lil angel? Wouldst thou shake de light fantastic wid me?

BARNEY (*chuckling with delight*). Yo' heah dat? Philosophizin' awready. Even in his sleep.

SAM. I wanna talk to yo, Chill, bout business.

CHILL. Can't dance wid thou, lil brownskin angel, I got sore feet fum standin' on de car all day. (*Shuts his eyes.*) Go back to yo' tree.

SAM. Chill. Please. I gotter talk to yo. How 'bout dat job you said you knew foh me? (*Shakes him.*) Chill!

CHILL (*opening his eyes again*). A job? Yo' wants a job, Sam Pickens?

SAM. Yop, you know what you tole me dis mawnin'.

(*CHILL rises and staggers impressively to the bar.*)

CHILL (*with much dignity*). Very well. Give me a beer, Barney. (*He drains it in a majestic silence.*) Now, Sam, I shall infohm yo' appertainin' to dis question of hoss-cah philosophy. Are yo' listenin'?

SAM. Yes, I am. But don't talk about angels again; I've heard you tell about dem before.

CHILL (*closing his eyes dreamily*). I lived wid a angel once for seven hundred years in a tree on Long Island. She was a fine-looking, brown-skin gal, wid red cheeks and black eyes, and my, how she could dance an' sing! Dat wuz befoh I met my present wife.

SAM (*shaknig him*). Aw, go on and tell me about dat job, Chill! Please.

CHILL (*opening his eyes and becoming very serious*). Suttinly, suttinly! I wuz comin' round to it. Gimme another beer, Barney. (*He drinks it.*) Sam, come hither, I wish to elucidate the history and theory of jobs and work unto thou. Are thou listenin'?

SAM. Yop.

CHILL. In de fust place, Sam, thou must not allow de white man to impose his theories of work upon thou. De great Negro race to which I and thou belong has never believed in work. Work is the ruination of the white race. Lookit dem—all skinny, pale, miserable and poor. Dey don't even git rich by wuhk. And wuhk ain't necessary—it's jest a disease. It's brutalizin. Accordin' to de Bible, see Exodus, Chapter 18, Jethro de Ethiopian, was de father-in-law of Moses, and taught him de ten commandments. Dey wuz eleven commandments at first—and de eleventh wuz, "Thou shall not work unless absolutely necessary." But de white men cut dat out. De Negroes are de Chosen People of de Scriptures, dey are de father of civilization. De Egyptians were Negroes. Hannibal wuz a Negro. Plato was a Negro. Spartacus was a Negro. Jesus was a Negro. Booker T. Washington was a Negro. Gimme another beer, Barney.

BARNEY. Sure. (*To SAM, gleefully.*) Ain't he going good now?

CHILL (*wiping his mouth*). Spartacus licked de Romans, cause dey made him and his friends work too hard. An' Plato said, work only three hours a day, and thou shalt be fed and have drink and everything. De African civilization wuz not based on wuhk, but on music, dancin' and

laughter and occasional fightin'. Dey call dem savages, but look at de white man and his Spanish American war—ain't he a savage, too? An' he don't even git any fun out of it. Lookit de way he wuhks in factories like a slave—ten hours a day, and no real cash for it. It's wrong. It can't last. De factories won't last. Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands—when we git black justice dere will be freedom. The white man's theories is all wrong, Sam, I tell you it ain't gonner last. We are rising, Sam—we are rising.

(He staggers back to his chair, flops into it, and is snoring again.)

BARNEY *(admiringly)*. Did you heah him, boys? Ain't he smaht? He's de smahtest man in Harlem, he is.

KID MUMBO. Dat Niggah could write a Carnegee lyberry book, ef he set his mind on it.

SAM *(disconsolately)*. But he ain't tole me bout de job he promised. *(Tries to wake him again)* Chill! Chill! *(No response)* Oh, I guess it ain't no use. He's gone foh de day, he is. *(Comes back to bar)* I nevuh have any luck nohow.

BARNEY. What yo' worryin' about so, Sam? Ain't worryin' over what de preacher said; ain't afraid of hell, is yo'?

SAM *(hanging his head)*. No, it ain't dat, Barney.

KID MUMBO. All our friends is goin' to hell, so dere's bound to be some fun dere, even ef it's hot, Sam. *(Laughs and slaps SAM on shoulder.)*

JEFF ADAMS. No eddicated man believes in hell. Why don't dem fellers dat dig oil-wells strike hell ef it's down below? Dey strike water, don't dey? Cheer up, Sam. *(Slaps SAM on the shoulder.)*

HANK SPIVEY. Wust hell I evah saw wuz on a turkentine farm in Gawgia.

SAM. Boys, I ain't afraid of hell, I'm tellin yuh. I use-ter believe in it, but I don't no more.

BARNEY. Well, what's frettin' yoh? Nevah seed yoh so blue befoh! Heah, take yoh banjo and play some; dat'll cheer yoh up.

SAM *(mournfully)*. No, I don't want it now, Barney. It ain't hell dat worries me; it's what dat preacher said. Him

sayin' I hadn't wuhked foh eight yeahs, and me unable to git up and answer back at him wid de essplanation. Dat's what eats me, Barney. (*Puts his elbows on the bar, head between his hands.*)

BARNEY. Aw, don't worry so, Sam.

HANK. Sure, what's de diff what a preacher has to say?

JEFF ADAMS. Have a drink, Sam, and play yo' banjo like always.

SAM. I 'preciates yo' kind wuhds, boys, but he suah huht me. You-all knows de truth; how I've looked fuh wuhk, don't yo'?

ALL. Sure, sure, Sam.

SAM. I ain't lazy, dat's what Sally can't understand. I ain't like Chill; I believe in wuhk, but it's jes' I kaint find de right job nohow. When I wuz down south wid de fambly wuhkin' our little patch, I wuhked as hahd as anyboddy. Ain't dat de truth?

HANK. It suah is.

BARNEY. Mighty nice down dere, ef I mus' say so. Little wash-white cabin, wid chinaberry trees at de door, and frontyard wid roses, an' a patch of peanuts, maybe, and yo' young shoats and yo' fat hens flouncin' comfotably round—an' de sunflowers—de giant sunflowers—

SAM. Dat's it, dat's it. De sunflowers at yo' own cabin door! Seems natcheral somehow to wuhk round yo' own place. But heah yo' allers wuhkin' for some boss, an' he never likes yo'; 'specially ef you got to stop and play de banjo oncet in a while to git rid of dem wuhkin' blues. You could allers do dat on yo' own patch down south; but boss don't understand dat up nawth.

HANK. But dey's lots of jobs goin' round up here. Yoh mustn't be too partikelar, Sam.

SAM. I ain't partikler, Hank. But I'm no good at nuthin. I've tried waitin on table, and shinin' shoes; but I hates it. Seems like a dog's wuhk; not a man's. An' I'm no good at no fussin' job like pullman porterin'; and I don't like longshorein'; I hates dem foremen fellers wid their nasty tongues; and I don't like factories neither—don't fit inter all dat noise. Jes a bo'n fool, me; good fer nawthin', I guess.

BARNEY. Well, what kind of a job does yo' crave den, anyway?

SAM. I dunno; nuthin, I guess, or jes standin' round and singin' and playin' de banjo. Dat's what I like.

BARNEY. It won't git you no nickels, Sam.

SAM. I know; ain't no room fer music nowhere, it seems. An' I gotter have music at mah wuhk.

HANK. Good Lawd, you shoulda stuck down among de white trash south, you oughter. Ef it ain't good enough for yoh why did you evah come nawth?

SAM (*simply*). I hadda come nawth cause dey lynched my brudder.

HANK. Oh, mah Gawd. Excuse me, Sam, foh dat question. Have a drink.

(*They drink silently. MR. BUTLER comes out of his undertaking parlors and walks past the saloon with a severe countenance, then up the stoop and into the tenement.*)

SAM. Dere goes our boarder, Mistuh Butler. Guess I better be movin, too, and lookout fer some job. Cain't go home today widout a job—Sally's crazy sore, I guess.

HANK. Wait a minute, don't go away feelin' so bad. Have anuther drink, Sam.

SAM. No, thanks, guess I'd better be off, an'—

BARNEY (*striking the counter suddenly, in a burst of inspiration*). Mah Jesus, wait a minute, Sam! Christa-mighty, why didn't I evah think of it befoh? Sam, has yo' evah been to Hoboken?

SAM. Hoboken? What is it?

BARNEY. Dat's a city, Sam, ovah Jersey side on de ferry boats. Lawdy, why didn't I think of it befoh? (*Hits the counter again and laughs heartily.*) Sam, dat's de place ter go. Dat's where dere's loads of jobs waitin' foh you.

SAM. Jobs? Whut kind of jobs?

BARNEY. All kinds, all kinds—anything yo want. I got a brother-in-law barber who lives ovah dere—an' he says theah's all kinds of jobs—moh than Noo Yawk.

SAM. Jobs foh cullud folks?

BARNEY. Yes, foh annybody. Nicest people in de world live in dat Hoboken. An', Sam, lissen—

SAM. What?

BARNEY. I just remembered dere's a sukkus playin' dere now. Git dat?

SAM. A sukkus? Wid ellerfunts and sich? What about it?

BARNEY. You might git a job wid de sukkus, playin' yo' banjo an' singin' like. Dat's what yo' were cut out for—a job wid a sukkus.

HANK. Say, dat is a good idea, Sam. Why don't you try it?

SAM. Mah gravy, Barney, you ain't funnin me, is yo'?

BARNEY. Suttinly not; I mean it. A sukkus in Hoboken.

SAM (*his face lighting up*). Cause dat lissens good, Barney, good as dey make 'em. Dat's copesetic, Barney; wow. (*Cuts a caper.*) Christamighty, gimme dat African harp and I'll practice up a minute foh mah new job. Mm-yah—won't it be jes grand ef I get dat job? I nevah had no luck in Noo Yawk; maybe mah luck'll change ef I cross de river. Copesetic, Barney dat's de kind of job I been lookin' for! Glory hallelujah! (*He strikes up on the banjo; all sing.*)

HANK. Nuther round of beers, and we'll drink to Sam's new job in Hoboken!

(*They are drinking and singing as the doors close on them.*)

SCENE VII

The Pickens home. SALLY is still lying on the bed, her face in her hands. Enter MISTUH BUTLER.

BUTLER. Mawnin. Sorry to see you grievin' so, Sister Pickens.

SALLY (*sitting up and wiping eyes hastily*). Oh, I'm all right, Mistuh Butler. I wuz jes a little weary.

BUTLER (*unctiously*). Moanin' oveh dat no-count man of yours, I suppose.

SALLY. Oh, no, jes weary. I wuz up at five dis mawnin', launderin' and fixin' things.

BUTLER. Well, well, I understand. Ain't no use hidin' fum me, Sister Pickens. I admire yo' grit, Sister Pickens. Yo' patience is wunnerful; no one else could live wid a god-less loafer like dat Sam.

SALLY (*faintly*). Sam's all right.

BUTLER (*bitterly*). He ain't all right. Why does you say he's all right? (*Steadying himself*) Sister Pickens, I gotter infohm you of some bad news.

SALLY (*in alarm*). Has somethin' happened to Sam?

BUTLER. No, but somethin's happened to me. My patience ain't so wunnerful as yo' patience, sister. An' I come to infohm yo' I'm gwine to move.

SALLY. Move? Out of my house? Oh, my Gawd—

BUTLER. Sorry, sister Pickens, but what yo' Sam-man did dis mawnin' is de straw dat broke de can-u-el's back. Pos-o-tive-ly! Ah can't affohd to be 'sociated wid sech a character. I got my business to think of. I got my Oswald's future to think of. I can't board no moah at the home of sech a scandalizin' pussin as Sam Pickens.

SALLY (*desperately*). Ain't I taken good care of yo' Oswald, Mistuh Butler? Ain't I cooked you good meals, and kept yo' room neat as a pin?

BUTLER. Ain't sayin' a wuhd agin yo' pussinly, Sister Pickens; don't git me wrong. Yo' one of the Lawd's blessed virgins, yes, suh. It's dat Sam of yours, not you, Sister Pickens. He ain't hardly respectable, dat man. I jes passed de saloon, and dere he wuz, drinkin' beer wid all de loafers and laffin' at me. (*His wrath rising*) He's a sink fo' de respectable cullud folks of Harlem, dat Sam of yours. He'll end in a jail-house. What he done dis mawnin' at de revival sneakin' out and scandalizin' de Reverend Rosewater dat way, wuz de last an' complete finish. I'm done wid him; I'm gonna move.

SALLY (*bursting into tears*). Oh, Mister Butler! I can't stand no mo'. What'll become of me and Honey Lou? Don't move, Mistuh Butler!

BUTLER (*pompously trying to comfort her*). Now, Sister Pickens, don't cry—don't cry—I has somethin' else to infohm you with.

SALLY (*still sobbing*). He ain't so bad, Mistuh Butler. He's jes onfortunate. He can't seem to settle into city ways. He's got too much cotton field in him, Mistuh Butler.

BUTLER. Now listen to me, Sister Pickens. Don't weep over dat wuthless loafer—lissen—I has somethin' else to in-fohm yo'. Dat's right, sit up and dry yo' eyes. Now yo' actin' better. (*Pats her cheek, then gets up and strides the floor majestically.*) Sister Pickens, ez I wuz a-standin' in my undertakin' parlors, jes now, embalmin' of Sister Jones—you remember her, don't you—

SALLY. Yes, you mean poor Lissy Jones, dat died and left—

BUTLER. Yes, she died last Monday; very sad. Well, I wuz a-embalmin' of her jes now—and mighty pretty job I'm makin' of it, too, ef I must say so myself—she'll look pretty as a picture when I'm done with her—well, then, I got to thinkin' about you, Sister Pickens—

SALLY. Of me, Mistuh Butler?

BUTLER (*with a glance of deep meaning*). Yes, you, Sister Pickens. An' it wuz a mighty good thought, ef I say so myself. Most of my best thoughts come to me when I'm a-standin' at my embalmin'. An' what I thought dis mawnin' wuz dat you oughtn't stand no more fum dat wuthless Sam Pickens. You stood enough.

SALLY (*faintly*). Well, what kin I do? He's my husband, ain't he?

BUTLER (*triumphantly*). Dat's jes it. He don't need to be. Jes divorce him.

SALLY. Divorce him? What does dat mean?

BUTLER. Throw him out, dat's what it means. Make him go out and rustle his own po'k-chops. You supported him long enough.

SALLY. But I'm kinda used to Sam.

BUTLER (*even more triumphantly*). Dere, I knew yo'd say dat. I suah kin unnerstand de wimmen; an' I had an-uther good idear when I was a-embalmin' of Sister Jones. I figgered most wimmen'd be lonesome widout a husband round the house, and so I figgered I might as well be yo' husband.

SALLY (*a little scared*). You, Mistuh Butler?

BUTLER. Suttinly, suttinly; I've nevah had nuthin' again you, Sister Pickens; it wuz jes dat Sam. An' yo'd be

mighty useful woman to me jes now, wid my undertaking business a-reachin' out all de time, and my Oswald growin' up, an' everythin'. Yep, I need a helpmate. It is not good for man to live alone, say de Scripture. An' you sho are a wunnerful cook, too, Sister Pickens.

SALLY. But what'd become of Sam ef I chucked him out?

BUTLER (*very wrathfully*). Musn't think of that scamp no mo'; must think of yourself an' yo' lil chile. Why, Sister Pickens, I's surprised at yo'; why yo' hemmin' an' hawin', hitchin' an' hesitatin' so? Cain't yo' see what I's doin' fo you? Can't yo' common sense choose twixt a bar-room loafer like Sam and a respectable undertaker like me—wid a good business reachin' out all de time? Huh?

SALLY (*timidly*). I don't know what to say, Mistuh Butler. Sam's been my husband nigh on to ten years.

BUTLER (*ferociously*). Ten years too long. I'm a bald-headed turkey buzzard ef I kin unnerstand why yo' grieves foh a lazy, triflin, common trash, blue-gum niggah like Sam Pickens. Ain't I made yo' an offer? I guess I had oughter move out anyway, Sister Pickens and find me a woman dat reely 'preciates my pussinality. Good-bye. (*Takes his hat and starts to leave.*)

SALLY (*miserably*). Don't go, Mistuh Butler. Lemme think it over.

BUTLER (*coming back and standing near the bed*). Huh! Can't be much thinkin' oveh a propasation like dat.

SCENE VIII

(*The curtain closes on the tenement room. Immediately the orchestra breaks into a loud cake-walk of the year 1900. The saloon doors burst open, and the men come forth dancing. Girls appear and dance with them. SAM sings and plays the banjo for them at one side, shouting "Put de gravy on it. Step up."*)

(*The music stops; the men return to the saloon; the stage is bare again except for SAM and his banjo. He sings:*)

SAM.

I gotta job—I gotta job—I gotta job in Hoboken,
Where de dollar bills grow on de melon vine,
Where evrybody's happy an' got lots of time,
I gotta job-job-job in Hoboken.

SAM (*half drunk and very jolly now*). So long, fellow-gladiators, I sure enjoyed yo' most noble company. Thankin' yo' one an all fo yo' kind attenshun, I will now circulate back to mah ancestral home in dat tenement dere, and break de news of my fine, easy sukkus job. (*Sings.*)

I gotta job, I gotta job, I gotta job in Hoboken,
Call me early in de mawnin, mother dear
Cause I gotta job-job-job—

(*A loud wailing and yowling strikes his ear. Little OSWALD appears on the stage, his collar soiled, and weeping terrifically. HONEY LOU appears next crying; then LIL JOE, very sullen, his fists doubled.*)

SAM. What's de fuss? Ain't been an earthquake, has they?

OSWALD. He hit me.

SAM. Wow, musta been an earthquake wallop by de sound of you! Whaffor he hit you?

OSWALD. Fer nuthin'.

SAM. Fer nuthin', hey? Shouldn't hit nobody fer nuthin, Lil Joe. (*Impressively*) Never slug nobody less you got a mighty good reason, Joe—den, slug him hahd. Dat's what Spotty-cuss say.

LIL JOE. He better shut up with his hell-talk or I'll hit him again.

SAM (*raising his hand with mock dignity*). Easy, Joe; halt thy aggravationness. Remember what Plato said: Once a genlmen, allers a genlmen. Dat's my motter, too. Now what you cryin' for, Honey Lou? (*Picks her up in his arms and kisses her.*) Mah sugah-baby, don't cry so hahd. You'll break yo' poor daddy's heart ef yo' cry dat way, an yo' daddy can't have his heart broke, cause he's gotta keep

in good physical condition till tomorrer mawnin', when he's gwine git a fine job in Hoboken wid a sukkus. Now, sweetie, tell yo' popper why yo're cryin'.

HONEY LOU. Oh, daddy, Oswald says I'm gone to hell and git burned, and I'm so scared.

SAM. Goin' to hell. Whaffor, sweet lil gal like youself?

HONEY LOU. Cause I wuz dancin' and singin' round de hurdy-gurdy.

SAM. You say dat, Oswald?

OSWALD. Yes, I did, and it's true. I heerd de preacher say it dis mawnin' when I got religion.

LIL JOE. An' Oswald say I kain't be a President cause I'm cullud and my father's a hoss-cah driver.

SAM. You say dat, too, Oswald?

OSWALD. Yair, it's true, ain't it?

SAM. My, my Osenwaldius! You suttinly a whole cyclopidia by youself, ain't you? You otter write a Carnegee Lyberry book, you ought. You know everything, Oswald—jurious, but de trouble—de big trouble—is yo' knows it all wrong, see? (*Puts HONEY LOU down.*) Now, chillen, we gonner study dis matter of hell. Hesh yo' Oswald, quit makin' dem funny sticky noises; and you, Lil Joe, don't act up so tough; you can't lick Jim Corbett yet. Set down, ladies and genl'men; I's gwine make yo' a speech.

(*They stop crying and sit down in front of him.*) Ladies, genl'men, bredern an' sistern; I'm glad to be 'dressin' you on dis 'spicious occasion. (*In a broad aside*) Now holler Hooray and clap yo' hand every time I make a good point. (*They do so.*) At's de way. Ladies and genl'men, de last speaker has said they's a hell. Now dat's a lie, ladies an' genl'men, and I kin prove it. Whaffor Gawd make two hells for? Wasn't dat Spanish American war hell enough? Ain't de climate hot enough up here, on one of dem hot summer nights I mean, when de flies is biting, and de bedbugs crawlin', and de steam comin' outta de sidewalks—

CHILDREN (*applauding*). Hooray!

SAM. Well, bedbugs ain't nuthin' to get excited 'bout. Anyway, dere's no hell down below; I done proved dat. Now as ter Gawd putting little chillen in hell foh singin' and

dancin', why sho, dat ain't true, neither, ladies and gemmen. Dancin's and singin's nacheral, ain't they; cause who give us feet to dance and throat to sing 'cept Gawd hisself? I been singin' an' dancin' all my life, ladies and genlmen, and I don't expect to go to hell. Well, dat proves dat.

CHILDREN. Hooray, hooray!

HONEY LOU. I want my pony, daddy.

SAM (*holding up his hand deprecatingly*). Later, madam.

HONEY LOU. An I want the gold piano yo promised, and de fiah injin—

SAM. Please, madam, later with questions. I will answer all questions later. Now let's git to de question as ter bein' a president. Dat's an easy one. Why, anybody kin be a president ef he smart enough, black or white. It says so in de Constitushion. (*Children applaud.*) White man thinks he kin keep black folks fum bein' president, but it's agin de Constitushion. Dat's what Chill McGregor says, and *he* knows. When yo' git big enough, Lil Joe, an' yo wants to be a President, jes go right ahead. Ef any low-down, no-count white trash tries to stop yo', jes read de Constitushion at him. An' ef he makes any fuder trouble, jes call foe me—Samuel Pickens; I'll tell him. Now dat settles dat.

HONEY LOU. I want my pony.

SAM. Yes, madam, I thank yo. I almost forgot yo' important question. Now dere's a time comin' chillen, when we shall all rise up and go to de land of Whangdoodle. Everything is free dere. De woods is full of banjo trees, and ham trees, and chocolate drop bushes an' all we have to do is stretch forth our hands, and say Hither an' it's ours. Dere's cigarette grass dere, and soda water rivers. Work ain't allowed on account of it bein' so bad foh de health. Every chile has a gold pinanner, and a fiah injin, and lots moh—moh dan yo' kin dream of.

HONEY LOU. But when we goin' dere, Daddy?

SAM. Termorrer mawnin', chillen, termorrer mawnin. Now less see you all dance. Up wid yo'.

(*They applaud, hooray, and spring to their feet.* SAM

plays his banjo, and they dance, imitating the cake-walkers of a few minutes previous. In a pause—)

LIL JOE. Uncle Sam, show us some of dose steps yo' wuz doin' yestiddy.

SAM. Suttinly, suttinly. *(He does a fantastic dance, which has hints of the Charleston, and they imitate him clumsily. At the finish)* Kaint be no hell-fiah foh good dancin' like dat, kin there? Less have a parade now, chillen. Less march up to yo' mammy and sing for her, Honey Lou. Case I got a job, chillen, a job wid a sukkus in Hoboken. Ain't dat wunnerful? A fine easy loafin singin' job!

(He strikes up on the banjo, singing the Hoboken song, and the children march behind him singing and playing imaginary instruments. They have paraded about the stage several times when MR. BUTLER comes down the steps of the tenement, and with an outraged countenance, grabs OSWALD by the hand. The parade stops.)

BUTLER. I tole you offen, Oswald, not to keep no low company, ain't I? *(He drags the boy toward the undertaking parlors.)* Yo' come an' study business now.

OSWALD. But I wanner play. *(Exit.)*

SAM *(looking after them)*. Low company, hey? I should ha' bust him in de mouf foh dat. Well, guess he don't know I gotta job. Dat would make him less high-an'-mighty.

HONEY LOU. Less parade some more, Daddy.

SAM. Suttinly, suttinly. Jes because our ahmy is lost one soldier, dat don't mean we're licked, does it? Ee-yah, copesetic!

(They parade again, and then march up the tenement stoop, and are heard singing the Hoboken song through the halls.)

SCENE IX

(The Pickens home again. SALLY is still seated on her bed, her moody face between her hands. She hears the singing in the halls, and looks up. A moment later SAM enters, leading the children. They sing and play for a moment, then quiet down under SALLY's glare.)

SALLY (*harshly*). Git outa here, chillen. Whut's all de monkeyshines, Sam? Are yo' drunk again?

SAM (*exuberantly*). No, I ain't drunk, not dis time. I gotta job, Sally.

SALLY. A job? Where?

SAM. In Hoboken.

SALLY. Whut doin'?

SAM. Wid a sukkus.

SALLY. When you start in?

SAM. Termorrer mawnin.

SALLY (*with bitter decision*). I don't believe yuh. Scat now chillen, run along or I'll wham yuh. I gotta talk to dis pizen-weed husband of mine.

(*The children run away; down the steps and around the corner out of sight, singing the Hoboken song SAM has taught them.*)

SAM (*a bit flustered, but keeping up his spirits*). Whut's de matter, Sally? Don't you reely believe me? Hones', it's a wunnerful job, Honey, bes' chance I evah had since I came Nawth.

SALLY (*hissing menace*). Tell me moah about it, Mistuh Pickens.

SAM (*fearful at first, but warming up to his theme as he proceeds*). Well, it's a good job, Sally—a good job. All I gotter do is play my ole banjo here, and sing a few cotton field songs and little things like dat. Rest of de time I'm watchin' de hossback riders ride hossback, and de lion tamers tamin' lions, and feedin' de ellerfunts, and havin' a fine time. Ain't it grand? Easy hours and magnolious pay, Sally—I tells yo, Honey, we's all bound foh Easy Street dis time—choo-choo—next stop Chicken and Ice Cream every day. An' I guess de sukkus boss won't make no bones 'bout allowin' you and Honey Lou to come in free—FREE Gratis—every time you want to see de sukkus. I'll fix it up for dat. Ain't it copesetic? (*He stops in full flight for a second, looking at her for approval.*)

SALLY (*coldly*). Go on.

SAM (*rattling on*). An' de most wunnerful folks live in Hoboken, too—awful kind and nice to cullud people. Chill

McGregor got a barber brother-in-law oveh dere, and he got a high-class tonsorial parlor, Sally, and Chill say dat he say de finest, nicest and most shavingest people in de whole world live in dat ole Hoboken. Why, what's de matter, Honey? Why you keep lookin' at me dat way? Ain't yo' glad I gotta job at last?

SALLY (*in a terrible voice*). Sam Pickens, all I's lookin' for, and all I's askin is—is you or isn't yo' awready got dis job?

SAM (*floundering*). Why, suah! Don't you believe, me, Honey—I know I got—

SALLY. Has you got it? Answer me.

SAM. But I tells you, honey—

SALLY. Yes or no.

SAM (*cornered*). Well, it's dis way—I good as got it, Sally. Suah, good as got it.

SALLY. You ain't got it then?

SAM (*desperately*). Good as got it, Sally! Goin' oveh dere in de mawnin' to fix things an—

SALLY (*exploding*). You ain't got it, dat's what you mean! Oh, Gawd, kill dis lazy foolish cotton-field niggah. Kill him foh me, or I'll have to do it.

SAM (*frightened*). Whut's de matter?

SALLY. Whut's the matter? (*Her voice rises to a hysterical scream.*) Askin' dat so innercent when dis is de tousanth time you come home wid a baby story like dat! What's de matter? (*Mimicking him*) I gotta job, Sally—I gotta job—I heerd dat a tousand times in de last eight years. Dem saloon loafers tell yo' somethin' about Hoboken or some odder place, and den yo' start dreamin' like a baby and spendin' yo' next year's wages out of de job yo' ain't got. (*Mimicking him*) What's de matter? An' I gotta keep on washin' clothes and breakin' my back scrubbin' white folks' floors, so's yo' kin strut about saloons and pool-rooms, playin' your banjo, singin', dancin', and talkin'. (*Very sarcastically*) Talkin' about your fine job yo' nevah got. Thea, dat foh yo' banjo. It's been a curse to dis fambly. (*She snatches it from him and throws it on the floor.*) I'm sick of you forever. I'm sick of slavin' foh you and yo' poor

ole mammy you've never did nuthin' for. I'm through wid you. We're divorced. Understand dat? Divorced! Git outa here, you big bum!

SAM. Git out! Divorced?

SALLY. Yes, divorced. We're divorced till you find a job. Ef you don't find a job today we're through forever—unnerstand dat? I got it all fixed—an' I gotta a good husband waitin' foh me—a man who wuhks.

SAM. Sally, you sholy don't mean all dat. Why, Honey—

SALLY. Don't honey me, you big bum. Don't touch me neither. Git out, or I'll take de mop after you an' chase you through de streets. I'll smash you and your saloon and your saloon gang. Git! Scat! (*She gets the mop.*)

SAM (*retreating before her*). But Honey—

(*She slams the door in his face, puts the mop down slowly, then suddenly throws herself on the bed, sobbing. SAM goes down the stairs. On the stoop he meets GRANNY PICKENS, who has just hobbled there.*)

GRANNY. Oh, now I found you, Sammy-boy. Come right back in de house. Dey's white men about, an' I's awful worried foh yo'. Dey's waitin' foh de dahk; dey got de fiah burnin'—

SAM (*long acquainted with her mania*). Dat's all right, mammy; go up stairs now; I'll take care of myself.

GRANNY. Whar you goin', Sammy?

SAM. Jes down de corner for some baccy. I'll be right back, mammy. Go up-stairs.

GRANNY. An' de Lawd spoke to me dis mawnin. He said he gwine make you one of His prophets, Sammy. You gwine prophesy of great things. Take care of yoself, Sammy, cause Gawd wants you to—

SAM (*soothingly*). Dat's right, Granny, go up-stairs now and wait foh me. I won't be long.

GRANNY. Awright, Sammy, I'll wait foh you; you ole mammy'll wait. Oh, Lawd, dem cruel white men—

(*She totters upstairs and into the tenement room. SALLY looks up but doesn't stop sobbing. GRANNY PICKENS doesn't seem to notice her sobbing, but sits down quietly with folded hands to wait for SAM.*)

(CHILL MCGREGOR has staggered out of the saloon while SAM was talking to his mother. CHILL is blind-drunk now; and flops on the curbing at extreme right of stage; here he goes to sleep. SAM, shuffles slowly and thoughtfully in that direction, after a pantomimic minute of hesitation as to which way to go—regret, sadness, shame, fear, determination, a moment's yearning before the saloon door, then renewed yet sad determination. He reaches CHILL and stops.)

SAM. Chill—waiting foh yo' hoss-cah to come back? (No answer.) My, my! He's sholy snagged up dis mawnin'. (SAM regards him a moment, then bends down and goes through CHILL's pockets. He finds an empty whisky flask which he shakes, turns upside down in disappointment, smells and finally returns sadly. Shakes CHILL again.) Chill, you don't know de bestest and most fastest way of walkin' to dat ole Hoboken?

(A snore is the only answer. SAM takes his coat off, puts it over his arms, and shuffles off sadly, as if for a long weary hike. Just before he disappears, he turns to look back for a moment. The doors of the revival meetings and the saloon open, and the people in those places are heard at their gospel singing and saloon singing. The door of the undertaking parlor opens, and MR. BUTLER and his SON are seen standing by a coffin. The tenement room is open and GRANNY PICKENS and SALLY are as before. GRANNY asks a question, and SALLY looks up. All this is seen for a flash as the curtain goes down, and SAM disappears, shaking his head wistfully and shuffling his feet on the long hike to Hoboken, and the job in the circus.)

CURTAIN

ACT II

TIME: Afternoon of the same day.

PLACE: Hoboken.

SCENE: The stage setting in this act is more extreme than the last. It must be constructively adapted to all the

action that takes place in this act, and it must also be a composite of all that goes on in SAM PICKENS' mind.

Parts of the design are: an African jungle, with huge, monstrous vegetation and palm trees. Great American sun-flowers. A park bench. Symbols of modern industrialism, wheels, pulleys, machine designs. Dollar marks. Musical notes. Question marks. African masks. Coney Island. Circus. Advertisements.

A battle of jungle and modern industrialism.

Sloping at left of stage, is a platform with booths. SAM PICKENS shuffles down this platform, as curtain rises. An orchestra is playing soft Negro music, jolly and light, yet with deep minor melancholies that now and then predominate.

SCENE I

PANTOMIME: *The first booth opens on a miniature stage set as a restaurant. A caricature dandy with monocle and white mask is eating at one table. A fat female plutocrat with white mask is seated at other. She has a small lap-dog in her arms, and rings a bell impatiently.*

SAM lingers in front of this scene. A head waiter appears, shrugs his shoulders, explains in distress to woman there are no waiters. She pounds bell madly. Head waiter steps out to SAM, and offers him the job. SAM accepts, and is given an apron. He then waits on the fat woman. She points to the dog, and orders something from the menu. SAM retires a moment, and then returns with a glass of milk and a spoon on an elaborate silver platter. The woman orders him to feed the dog and SAM reluctantly does so. The woman watches him disdainfully through her lorgnette. Suddenly the dog starts yelping and choking, and the woman snatches him from SAM, who spills the glass of milk. The woman furiously pounds the bell, the head waiter appears, and orders SAM out. SAM throws his apron in the woman's face and runs out; then shuffles wearily along.

The next booth opens. The music has become livelier, and in a shoe shining parlor a Negro is shining shoes to

the music's beat. SAM looks on; the shoeshiner points to the next chair, where a fussy fat stockbroker in a white mask is stamping impatiently. SAM puts his coat down, seizes the brushes, and goes to work. He does a fantastic jig as he works, with many flourishes. Suddenly he brings his brushes down hard on the customer's foot; the stockbroker howls and kicks at SAM's face. SAM deliberately kicks back, and the stockbroker falls over. The other shoe-shiner lifts his hands in horror, and SAM throws the brushes down and shuffles off. Booth is curtained.

Circus music now—Spanish and florid. The next booth opens—it is one of those Hit the Nigger and Get a Cigar things found in side-shows. A painted canvas with this slogan at back; two holes in canvas, one of them occupied by a Negro head; the other vacant. A young lad in Navy uniform is throwing balls at this head; another sailor watches him. A barker in fancy vest is pounding with a stick and shouting for customers. He sees SAM and offers him the job in the empty canvas hole. SAM hesitates; the barker shows him money; and gives him two dollars. SAM accepts and goes behind the canvas. The other sailor boy then commences firing baseballs at him. One hits SAM; he shakes his head in amazement, then steps from behind the canvas, and picks up the baseballs and begins throwing them madly at the two sailors and barker. They duck and the barker rushes with his stick toward SAM, who disappears at back of canvas. Curtain shuts down and music stops, on a low sad minor wail. SAM reappears further down the slope, shuffling moodily, his coat over his arm, and rubbing his head. He comes to end of slope, and finds a park bench by a tree and sits down. A bum reading a newspaper is already seated there.

SCENE II

BUM (*roaring with delight*). Ain't dat great? Ain't dat great?

SAM. Ain't what great?

BUM. We're de richest an' de most powerful nation in de

whole cock-eyed world. De Department of de Treasury reports we own one hundred billion, two hundred million, five-hundred thousand dollars, and fifteen cents! Ain't dat great? (*Slaps himself on the chest triumphantly.*)

SAM. What, de fifteen cents?

BUM. Say, what's de matter wid you? Ain't you an American? (*Suddenly starts whining.*) Excuse me, mister, I didn't mean to start no argument. But you're mentioning the fifteen cents reminded me I'm hungry. My belly ain't met a pork-chop since I wuz with Coxey's army. Couldn't lend me fifteen cents, could you? I'm awful hungry.

SAM. Brother, I could have a lot of fun with a piece of apple pie myself. I'm broke, too; lookin' for a job.

BUM (*insolent again*). Oh, yuh are, are yuh? An' yuh wanna job, hey?

SAM. Yes; heard of any?

BUM. No, I haven't. Ain't heard of one in twelve years. Don't expect to hear of any, either. (*Reads the paper and chuckles.*) One hundred billion—two hundred million—five hundred thousand dollars and fifteen cents—Can you beat us Americans? No, you can't.

SAM (*humbly*). Ain't any other news in dat paper, is they?

BUM. Ain't dat news enough? What kind do you want?

SAM. News of jobs.

BUM (*incredulously*). Yuh really want a job? Say, you're funny. Nobody with brains ever works, don't you know dat? Lookit me. Well, well, less see—maybe we kin find you somethin'. Gotta humor a crazy man now and den. (*Turns the pages.*) Yair, here it is. Strong colored man wanted for moving pianos—Strong colored man wanted for shovelling coal—Wait! Here's another—Colored man wanted, strong, for an iron foundry—and here's another—Strong man, colored, to excavate tunnel under river—

SAM (*mournfully*). Brudder, dat's enough. Guess I ain't dat strong. I ain't strong at all.

BUM. Sure. I'm weak, too. What kind of a job you want anyway?

SAM. Dis is Hoboken, ain't it?

BUM. Yair, an' a tough ole burg too.

SAM. I'm lookin' for a job wid a sukkus heah. Ain't seen it, has you?

(*Police whistles sound, and the bum springs to his feet in alarm.*)

BUM. Didja hear dat?

SAM. Is dat de sukkus?

BUM. No, young feller, dat's de bulls—de flatfeet—de cops. An' I'm goin'—moving far away from here. An' if you stay behind, you gonna git a job, but not in a sukkus—no!—in a jailhouse or a hospital bed.

SAM. We ain't done nothin, has we? What de cops want?

BUM. My boy, take the woid of an exploit. Dis town is most horstile and toughest burg in de woild when it comes to boes, vags and fellers like us. Dey got a mayor here dat eats hoboos fer breakfast, widout any salt or pepper either. Dey got a chief of police dat skins 'em raw, and laffs at de job. Dey sap yuh and dey slug yuh and dey jail yuh and dey kill yuh—and—ef you're a nigger—twicest as much.

SAM. But why? Why?

BUM (*with mock daintiness*). Oh, they are so fond of sport. So long, dear friend, and I do hope you will have no undue difficulties in securing a position. (*Hums.*) For you're only a boid in a gilded cage—(*Shuffles off, speaking proudly.*) One hundred billion, two hundred million—(*Exit.*)

SCENE III

(*The Circus. Faint circus music as the hobo leaves; then silence.*)

SAM (*looking after hobo and soliloquizing*). He must be crazy, dat feller. I ain't gonna mind what he said 'bout de cops—I ain't got nuthin to be 'fraid; whut I done, anyway? Dat feller's jest crazy. I'll sit heah an' rest mah feet. Dat wuz a long walk fum Harlem. Lucky I had three cents foh de ferry—Barney didn't say dey wuz a river to cross. (*Shakes himself restlessly.*) Hum-hum—dat hobo feller give me de blues. Bein' so uppety cause I'm lookin'

foh a job, and he ain't. Well, dat ain't a bad life at dat, ridin' up and down de country in box-cars—seein' de world. Sleepin' in barns and fields, jes driffin' along. Ain't so bad a life, but what happens to yo' wife and kid? I couldn't leave mah sweet Honey Lou, no suh. Guess dat hobo ain't got any kid—he's so careless goin'. But ain't it hell about dem jobs? Strong colored man wanted—strong colored man—Guess it's de same here in Hoboken as in Noo Yawk—jes hard wuhk and little pay foh de cullud folks all over de world—waitin' on table, shinin' shoes, or gittin' knocked on de head wid baseballs. Why is it? Yop, dat hobo feller give me de blues. (*He starts playing an imaginary banjo and singing softly to the tune of his Hoboken song.*)

I got de blues, I got de blues, I got de job-huntin',
 nuthin-to-do blues,
 Noo Yawk and Hoboken jes de bluest towns,
 Never give yo' nawthin—

(*A blare of circus music interrupts him; he springs to his feet excitedly.*) Dere it comes now! Thought I heard circus music little while back. Wish I had mah banjo now.

(*Here, if the director has the patience and the ingenuity, a fantastic circus parade of animals and performers may be improvised, to the accompaniment of wild circus music.*)

(SAM rushes up to various people in the line, and asks them). Job? Job? (*Then nod their heads negatively and point their thumbs backward. The parade gathers about SAM.*) What, no job fo' me?

(*The giraffes, elephants, lions, monkeys, tumblers, clowns and others shake their heads in chorus, and point paws, feet, hands and heads backward. A quartette of clowns, who are in fact the men in the bar-room in previous act, and must give off a faint hint of being so, sing at SAM. The music blares up again, and a police whistle is heard. The parade begins to march, and a white-masked RINGMASTER enters snapping his whip, and blowing his whistle. He is dressed in high hat, frock coat, boots, and has a red nose and big*

moustache, and yet he looks like MISTAH BUTLER, of previous act.)

RINGMASTER. Git on a move on, you lazy hounds.

SAM (*approaching him humbly, hat in hand*). Gotta job for me, mistuh? I kin dance, sing, think up good jokes and musical blues—

(*The RINGMASTER looks him up and down, then blows his whistle.*)

RINGMASTER. We need a savage. (*The music breaks forth again; this time a primitive African dance. A group of tall, powerful Negroes, in the feathers and beads of the jungle, carrying shields and assegais, come trotting out. They dance. The RINGMASTER shoves SAM into their midst and he dances clumsily with them. At the end the RINGMASTER blows his whistle again, and the dancers give a last wild whoop and bound off the stage. Circus music recommences softly. SAM is exhausted and wipes his forehead with his hat. The RINGMASTER starts to go.*)

SAM (*following him*). But Mistuh, mistuh boss, you promised me a job.

RINGMASTER. You're too civilized.

SAM. Too civilized? Didn't I dance good? Honest, mistuh, I ain't civilized.

RINGMASTER. Are you a cannibal? Do you eat human flesh?

SAM. No, mistuh, but I kin learn.

RINGMASTER. Can you read and write?

SAM. Yes, mistuh boss, but I kin forget it.

RINGMASTER. Too civilized. We want savages. It pays. As manager of the Great and Gargantuan American Circus, I make no false representations to my public. When I promise my public real African cannibal savages in one of their thrilling and unparalleled savage dances, I give my public real savages—man-eaters right from the jungle. (*He starts to go.*)

SAM. But I kin be a savage, mistuh. I'll do anything foh a job. I gotta—I jes gotta have a job, mistuh.

RINGMASTER. Ain't seen an ole nigger woman, have you?

SAM. No, suh.

RINGMASTER. Run away from our circus, she did. Belongs to me—to my circus. Brought her from the jungle to do voodoo tricks, and she run away. Broke her contract. But I got my men out—they'll find her dead or alive. Tell her that—We'll get her dead or alive.

SAM (*frightened*). Yes, suh, yes, suh. (*The RINGMASTER leaves. SAM follows him to very end of stage.*) But how 'bout a job foh me, mistuh? (*Comes back miserably and flops on bench.*) Oh, whut's de use? Now de sukkus job has gone up de flue. Barney give me a wrong steer about dis Hoboken. Ain't no job foh me, anymore dan in Noo Yawk. Whut'll I do now, go home? Ain't got de heart to go home. Sally say she divorce me if I don' come back wid a job. It's all my fault. I ain't even good enough to be a cannibal savage in a sukkus. I'm too civilized. But Chill allers said Africans wuz de most civilized of everybody. I don't unnerstand it. Honey Lou, yo' father's jes good-fer-nawthin! Whut'll I do now? Ef Sally takes Honey Lou away fum me I'll kill myself. I'll jump in de Harlem river—(*He gets up and moves about wildly, then flops back on bench.*) Case I won't be good-fer-nawthin no mah. Oh, ain't dey a job foh someone like me? (*Puts his face down and sobs.*) Not in de whole wide world, not even Hoboken? Lawdy, my baby Honey Lou, yo' daddy's no count, and no one wants him—

(*Mysterious music; four white-masked POLICEMEN come sleuthing in. They watch SAM a moment, whisper, then stalk up in unison and grab him violently. They throw him on the ground, beat him with their clubs, and kick him in a queer rhythmic semi-dance, chanting their refrain.*)

SAM (*startled*). What's de matter? Whut've I done?

FIRST COP. Kick in his ribs.

2ND COP. Jump on his face.

3RD COP. Gouge out his eyes.

4TH COP. Put him in his place.

SAM (*groaning*). Don't, please don't. I wuz jes lookin' foh a job.

1ST COP. Hammer in his nose.

2ND COP. Bust in his jaw.

3RD COP. Kick him below the belt.

4TH COP. Make him learn the law.

SAM. Oh, Lawdy, yo' killin' me! Don't, don't!

1ST COP. Bust his arms and legs.

2ND COP. Bust his skull and crown.

3RD COP. Just a coal-black nigger.

4TH COP. Chase him out of town.

SAM (*screams*). Don't, don't, don't, don't! Lawdy!
(*Falls back groaning, utterly exhausted.*)

1ST COP. Now we learned yuh a little lesson, we hope yuh won't do it again.

SAM. Yes, Mistuh Cop.

2ND COP. Don't yuh know they's a law against bums in Hoboken—especially black bums?

SAM. Yes, mistuh cop.

3RD COP. Git outa town in ten minutes, or we'll give yuh a taste of real American law. This wuz only a sample, see?

SAM. Yes, mistuh cop.

4TH COP. We'll lock yuh in de jail-house and throw away de key, forever ever and ever, yuh black bastard!

SAM. Yes, mistuh cop. (*They march off in their rhythmic dance of brutality, chanting as they go—*)

1ST COP. Mayor wants it done.

2ND COP. Ministers say it's due.

3RD COP. Business pays to have it.

4TH COP (*cooly*). Lady clubs like it, too. (*Exit.*)

SAM (*groaning and writhing on the ground*). Mammy, mammy! I want my mammy! I'm dyin', Mammy. I want to die, and leave dis orful world. Why dey beat me so? . . .

(*Music breaks into a medley of old rag-time, which includes Alexander's Rag-time Band. A COP appears with a placard: "America First." A fat masked MAYOR prances out, speaking the following:*)

MAYOR.

I am the Mayor, happy and gay
Law and order must rule the day.
America first, hip, hip, hooray!

(*Then a CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MAN*).

Chamber of Commerce Man am I,
Business, business is my cry.
Down with the workers, down and out;
Deport them all, that's my shout.

(*Then a MINISTER*).

I am the minister, pal of Jesus,
Kill all the rough-necks, just to please us.

(*Then the PRESIDENT of a WOMAN'S CLUB*).

Come on and hear, come on and hear, how
good women rule the land.

Come and hear, come on and hear, how
we've made them take a moral stand.

(*They do a little dance. Then two historical figures appear briskly from each side of stage, and come up to each other and shake hands.*)

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Hullo, George Washington.

GEORGE WASHINGTON. Hullo, Christopher Columbus.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. You had a tough time at Valley Forge, didn't you?

GEORGE WASHINGTON. You bet. And you sailed the Atlantic in a rowboat.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. I did. Was it worth while, George?

GEORGE WASHINGTON. Maybe. Gimme a light.

(*They touch cigarettes and smoke, then join others in dance.*)

CHORUS:

Law and order must rule the day
America first; hip, hip, hooray!

(*Exit all.*)

SAM (*on the ground still*). Dey bust mah head. I feel so queer. Don't know where I am. (*Gets up, staggers about, then falls down again.*) Everything's queer—changed—dey bust mah head open. I want my mammy. (*Screams.*) Mammy! Yo Sammy wants yo!

(*An Old Woman appears, who looks much like his mother in previous act, but is dressed in barbaric colors. She is*

stealing fearfully across the stage.) Oh, dere she is. Mammy!

OLD WOMAN. Dey after me. Dem sukkus soldiers wid guns. But I'll git back to Africa, to mah people.

SAM. Mammy, help me! Don't you hear me? Dem white men tried to kill me, I'm bleedin' all over. Git me a drink, Mammy, I'm feelin' so queer. Don't you hear?

OLD WOMAN (*not hearing, and staring about her wildly*). I'll go back. Yes mah Lawd. I'll swim, I'll fly, I'll git back. De black forest by de golden river. Dey'll never cotch me. (*She steals out.*)

SAM. But why you leavin' me? Ain't yo' mah mammy? Don't even mah mammy love me no more? Everyone's gone away, and left me here to die. (*Breaks down and sobs.*) Dem white men wid clubs beat me up for nawthin. Allers beatin' you up ef you got a black face—always sappin' yo' up. Always clubbin' yo head open! Ain't I American too?

(*A beautiful Spring melody, very soft, a dance, is heard. Police whistles again, then the FOUR COPS steal back. They have rifles now.*)

1ST COP. She come this way.

2ND COP. I see the old bitch's tracks.

3RD COP. We'll get her, the black bastard, dead or alive. (*Exit.*)

SAM (*trying to rise and screaming*). Oh, Mammy! Dey after my Mammy, too! Devils, they want to kill my Mammy—kill everybody wid a black face. De world's full of white devils. (*Groans strangely.*) Queer. Funny. Who play dat beautiful music? I hear music in mah ears. Where am I? Is dis America? Hoboken? No, I'm dyin'. My head's bust open, I'm bleedin' all over. O Lawd, I wanter die. I wanter git out of America. Dey don't want black folks here. (*Raises himself, shakes his fist and screams.*) White devils! White devils! (*Falls back and faints. The music rises to crescendo. A beautiful young Negro girl, in a woodsy filmy dress, comes out and dances. She looks like SALLY, SAM's wife, but much younger, serener. SAM, groan-*

ing, recovers his senses and watches her a moment with blinking eyes. Then he crawls over closer.)

SAM. She looks like Sally. But she ain't Sally. Lady, is you real?

(The music softens to a whisper; the girl stops dancing and runs to SAM and lifts his head.)

ANGEL *(softly)*. Sam Pickens!

SAM. Lady, is you really real? Is dis Hoboken or Heaven, lady?

ANGEL. Sam Pickens!

SAM. You look like Sally, lady, but you ain't her. How you know my name, lady?

ANGEL. Sam Pickens, I know all the names in the world. I'm the Angel of Hoboken—I'm ten thousand years old.

SAM *(blinking in surprise)*. My, my! De one Chill told me about?

(She is bandaging his head, and then she brings him water in her hand from an imaginary spring. He drinks it gratefully.)

SAM. Oh, lady, lady! Dat so cool and sweet, dat water, like angel water. I feel like singing. I feel like sayin' great words. *(Leans back on her arm.)* I must be dreamin', but it's a mighty pleasant dream now.

ANGEL. You're not dreaming, Sam. This is as real as Harlem—this is Hoboken, all is real as moonlight.

SAM. But you ain't ten thousand years old, is you? Sweet, pretty li'l gal like you?

ANGEL. Yes, Sam Pickens, for I'm an angel.

SAM. Yes, yes, I remember. You're dat gal Chill McGregor always talked about. But I never thought I'd see one. Maybe when you git yo' head busted open, you see them.

ANGEL. Did they bust your head open, Sam? Who did it? And why?

SAM. White men done it, lady—white devils—case I wuz lookin' foh a job.

ANGEL. Poor Sam Pickens. Poor, poor Sam Pickens! *(She strokes his head, then kisses him on the mouth.)*

SAM *(with deep feeling)*. Thank you, Miss Angel.

ANGEL. For what?

SAM. For dat kiss. But don't do it again.

ANGEL. Why not, Sam Pickens?

SAM (*inspired*). It was too powerful sweet. Nuther kiss like dat and my life would be lost in yo' life, and I'd burn up in music-fire and be no more.

ANGEL. Sam, don't be afraid of me. We are alike—we are music.

SAM. You make me forget everything—Harlem an' everything.

ANGEL. Forget everything then, Sam Pickens. (*She kisses him again—he moans in ecstasy.*) Forget everything, Black Man—poor black man—forget the rope, the tar and feathers, the flames at the hitching post. Forget the cold sneers and cruel laughter of the world. Forget the past and sing only the deep music of the melodious future. (*The music is playing again, she dances a few bars and comes back to him.*)

SAM. You're so happy, lady—Have you ever suffered?

ANGEL. Yes, Sam Pickens. I was happy for thousands of years. But then I suffered for a long time, too. I lived in a forest here with my brothers and sisters. I was happy. The Indians lived here after a time, and were good to us. Then the white men came, and cut down our homes. My brothers and sisters died. I wandered off alone.

SAM. Jes a poor li'l sufferin' orphan, wuzn't yo'?

ANGEL. I wandered. But the white men caught me. They used their cruel wicked magic; they turned me into a waitress in a restaurant in Hoboken. I was not happy as a waitress; I could never sing or dance. I suffered. But then I escaped. I wandered again, and I found a beautiful forest in Long Island. There I live in a beautiful tree, and dance with my brothers and sisters under the skies of imagination.

SAM. And why you come back here to de ole home town, Miss Angel?

ANGEL. To see my poor lonely tree that I once lived in. I dance for it that it mayn't die for want of friends.

SAM. Dat's sholy sweet of you, Miss Angel. Yo' suf-

ferin' has made yo' unnerstand everything. You even had pity on me.

ANGEL. But I love you, Sam Pickens.

SAM. Love me?

ANGEL. Yes.

SAM. Why, Lady, nobody loves me. I'm jes' a shifless wuthless nigger who can't find a job.

ANGEL. You are music, Sam Pickens. That's why I love you. I hear music coming from you that I can forever dance to, the world's eternal music. You must rise and come with me to Long Island, Sam Pickens, and we will live together and be happy.

SAM. But Lady, I gotter find a job.

ANGEL. You won't need a job there—you'll be an angel too, you'll sing all day, dance. Come!

SAM. Don't ask me again, Lady. Don't ask me again. I'm forgittin' everything. (*He rises.*) I jes gotter find a job, Miss Angel. I don't know why, I've forgotten why, but hones' Lady, dere's a good reason why I must go lookin' up a job.

ANGEL (*taking his hand*). Come, my darling. Long Island has deep cool forests. You will be an angel and leap and shout for joy. (*They dance together slowly to the music, and as they dance, speak.*)

SAM. Is there white men in de forest?

ANGEL. No white or black there—only the deep green.

SAM. Does cops beat you up? Is there suffering?

ANGEL. No cops, no suffering—only innocent morning delight.

SAM. Money, jobs or bosses?

ANGEL. No money, jobs or bosses—only laughter under the sky of imagination.

(*Police whistles.—Suddenly SAM drops and crouches in terror. Music stops.*)

ANGEL. Sam Pickens, what has happened to you?

SAM. The whistles! Dey comin' after me again.

ANGEL. Let's fly, Sam!—Come with me—(*Takes his hand, but as they start the FOUR COPS enter and surround the pair.*)

1ST COP. See the damn nigger.

2ND COP. Still in our town.

3RD COP. Got a wench with him.

4TH COP. Knock the bastards down. (*The clubs rise and fall for a moment; then the COPS stand back; SAM and The Girl are on the ground.*)

1ST COP. Told him to quit town, and he's still here.

2ND COP. With a yaller wench. He's a tough guy, he is.

3RD COP. Whistle for the Judge; he'll learn these birds a lesson. (*They whistle. A crash of discords and pompous chords, with cymbals at every step. The JUDGE appears. He is the RINGMASTER in a black robe, still carrying his whip. Retainers in black robes follow him, bringing chair, table, gavel and other legal necessities, which they set out for him.*)

JUDGE (*taking his seat and rapping with the gavel*). The Court is open. What are the charges against these prisoners?

1ST COP. Vagrancy. Likewise singing and dancing, Your Honor.

2ND COP. Petty happiness during business hours, Your Honor.

3RD COP. Highway music-making; assault and jollity, Your Honor.

4TH COP. First degree dreaminess, and second degree fantasy, Your Honor.

JUDGE. What do you say for yourselves, defendants—guilty or not guilty?

SAM (*excitedly*). Excuse me, Your Honor, but I'm suttinly not guilty. Why I never done nuthin' to nobody. I believe in de Constitushon, Your Honor, hones' I do—I love de Constitushon. An' dose bad ole cops come along and beat me up— (*Points to his bandages.*)

JUDGE. Irrelevant and most immoderately immaterialistic. Silence in the courtroom. (*Bangs with gavel.*) The question is, Sam Pickens: were you or were you not out of work during working hours?

SAM. I is out of work, Your Honor, but—

JUDGE (*banging*). Shut up! That's enough! What

does the other defendant plead—guilty or not guilty?

ANGEL. Guilty! I have not bought nor sold, I have not ruled others nor been ruled. I have been free. I have lived earth's wonder. I have made music. I am guilty of all the crimes on the calendar of your fiendish system. I am guilty of harmony. I do not recognize the jurisdiction of this court. Let the oriole or the lark be my judge. Let this tree or those clouds pass judgment on me. I—

JUDGE (*furiously pounding*). Can it, can dat chatter! Gettin' fresh to the judge, are you? Think you're a hard case, hey. Must be an old offender. Now, tell me how much money you got.

ANGEL. None. I need no money. I'm an angel, and—

JUDGE. You look like a wop to me. How long you been in dis country?

ANGEL. Ten thousand years.

JUDGE. Order in the courtroom. She's drunk. How much money you got, Sam Pickens?

SAM. Same as always, Jedge—nawthin'.

JUDGE. And why weren't you workin', both of yuh?

SAM. I couldn't find a job, Jedge. I looked and looked all over America, but they wasn't any jobs for black faces. Den I come here and found dis lady dancin—

JUDGE. That's enough. (*Bangs gavel and looks very solemn.*) Order in the courtroom. I will now pass sentence on these prisoners. I find them guilty of being poor. I find them guilty of being lazy and musical. I find them guilty of every other crime possible to persons who can't afford to hire lawyers. A case such as this brings again to the notice of every Nordic American that our immigration laws must be amended. Not only should no more foreigners be admitted, but every foreigner in the country should be kicked out! If that is too drastic a step, at least they should be lynched or locked up in jail. Then all our problems would be solved—there would be no more rape, burglary, divorce, assault, prostitution, strikes, rheumatism, war or music-making—if we killed all the foreigners. These are two of the worst offenders against morality and Nordic Americanism I have ever had in my court. They horrify

me. Neither has any visible means of support. One claims to be an Angel, but she is obviously a drunk and disorderly wop. The other is a Negro, and has not even attempted to deny the fact. I sentence them both to life imprisonment in a factory, and may God have mercy on their souls. Sheriff, do your duty.

(SAM and The ANGEL fall on their knees in terror, and wail for mercy. The JUDGE moves off in a dance with his retainers.

Factory whistles blow. A curtain falls at right of stage, revealing an enormous cage with a huge BLACKBIRD perched on top. Pause. A moment's silence.

The Orchestra breaks into monotonous machine music, irritating and harsh.

A file of men and women factory slaves in overalls come lockstepping in, herded by the cops with rifles. Then the CHIEF-HERDER appears; it is the RINGMASTER-JUDGE snapping his whip. He is now dressed like a typical Art Young caricature of a capitalist, with a dollar sign painted on his white vest. He whips the workers into the cage, where they fall into machine dance motions. SAM and the ANGEL have been put into overalls, and are herded in with the rest.

A frothy Broadway musical comedy tune rises above the machine music. Four chorus girls in tights step out and dance with the RINGMASTER JUDGE and his assistants. They sing:)

We love money—money—money
 Money buys champagne and love.
 See the workers working for our fun,
 We own workers who make our money,
 Bringing us money—money—money.

(They dance off amorously; the machine music rises again; the workers dance their stiff, harsh machine dance.

Two men in ancient costume, one Greek, the other Roman, appear at the left of stage and watch the factory. They are SPARTACUS, taken by BARNEY of previous act, and PLATO, acted by CHILL MCGREGOR.)

SPARTACUS. The workers are still slaves. The blood I

and the Roman slaves shed was all in vain. But let there be more rivers of blood shed for freedom. Let us destroy these horrible machines first.

PLATO. Patience, O Spartacus. The machines will yet set men free. Reason will suggest a way. Let us watch.

(The old Negro mammy steals muttering and cowering across the stage.)

Over and against the machine music SAM PICKENS has begun singing that sad, profound Negro spiritual of slavery: "Go Down, Moses," in the chorus of which the others join.

At the end of the song PLATO steps forward and addresses the workers.)

PLATO. I am Plato, philosopher of the Greeks. I taught them, in my Republic, how human beings might live beautifully, but they would not learn the lesson, and they sank into doom and dust.

SPARTACUS. I am Spartacus. I led the Roman slaves and gladiators against the Roman tyranny. We failed; but the workers will not fail in the future. The future belongs to the workers. Arise, arise!

PLATO. Arise, workers of the world, workers black and white, from your slavery at the machines. Slavery is no longer necessary. The machines will do the work of the world from this day. In three hours each day enough can be produced to feed the world, and give it happiness.

SAM *(stepping through the crowd of workers at the bars)*. Only three hours a day, Mister Plato?

PLATO. Yes.

SAM. Dat sounds like what Chill McGregor told me. But de boss say we hafta work ten hours.

PLATO. The factories do not belong to the bosses, but to you.

SAM. How kin we prove dat?

PLATO. By taking the factory!

SAM. But how'll we git out of de factory, Mister Plato? We're locked in by poverty.

PLATO. The factory bars are unreal. They exist only in your own minds. Step through them and see. *(The*

workers try the bars and then rush out joyfully.)

SAM. They're rubber, they're rubber, not steel. We're free.

ALL. Free, free, free! (*A joyous dance of all. At the end:*)

SAM. Thanks, Mister Plato, it's copesetic to be free. What'll we do now?

PLATO. Elect a president and run the factory for yourselves.

SAM. But who kin we elect? No one's had any experience.

ALL. We want Sam Pickens for President. Sam Pickens!

ANGEL. Yes, Sam Pickens, for he's the finest singer in the factory. All in favor say aye.

(*They shout aye. Gorgeous robes are produced and SAM is dressed in them.*)

PLATO. A good choice. You will have a great deal of leisure now, and music will be one of the most important things in your lives. Congratulations, Sam Pickens. (*Shakes his hand.*)

SPARTACUS. Congratulations, brother!

ALL. Speech, speech, Sam Pickens. Speech!

SAM (*embarrassed*). Well, folkses, dis is surely a big surprise to me. It seems like a dream, I suah nevah expected to be made a President; allers thought us black folks could do de job jes as well as white folks; ain't much to it, I reckon, but nevah thought I'd be the fust one to git dis fine job. Ain't it wunnerful, though; we only gonna havto work three hours a day? No, I kin hardly believe it, and I kin believe most anything. It's fine; an', folks, I kin tell you, dere's goin' to be lots of fine singin' and dancin' under my administration.

ALL. Hooray!

SAM. No one gonna weep, no one gonna moan any more. Everyone singin' and raisin' hell like li'l birdies on de trees. No more wuhkin' like a dog—no more lynchin', no more hungry kids. I allers knew things could be like dat, but nevah knew it was so easy to get it. Nevuh believed in hard work, folkses. All mah life I've been against it. Been

against workin' in factories, too; liked cotton-field work better, wid your own cabin and sunflowers. But now dere'll be sunflowers round de factory door. An' a crowd of friends inside, workin' three hours. Say, won't factories be jes copesetic? Jes' plain folks like us, black and white, runnin' de world. Eee-yah, I jes' wanna sing and dance till I bust, thinkin' of it.

(The music strikes up; he leads in a dance with the ANGEL. Suddenly the old Negro Mammy rushes in, screaming with terror. A shot is fired and she falls dead at SAM's feet. Music stops. SAM looks at her in horror. The FOUR COPS with rifles rush on stage.)

SAM. Whut's dis? Has dey killed my ole mammy? *(Bends down.)* No, dis ain't my mammy; queer; jes' an old cullud mammy looks lak mah own mammy. Gawd, why yo' killed her foh, anyway? Why you shoot dis ole woman, you murderers?

1ST COP. She belonged to the Ringmaster, and she run away.

SAM. She didn't belong to no one but herself, you murderers! Ain't no more slaves; don't you know we took de factory? Whut'll we do wid dese murderers, Mistuh Plato? Has we got a right to kill dem?

PLATO. No, just put them to work. Put them in overalls. *(The COPS are surrounded and put into overalls. The RINGMASTER-JUDGE-CAPITALIST appears, snapping his whip.)*

RINGMASTER. What's this? What's happened here? Get back to work.

SAM. Put dat man in overalls, too, before I git at him. Put him in double overalls. *(This is done.)*

SAM *(kneeling beside the old mammy)*. Jes' a poor ole black mammy; an' dey chased her, an' hounded her, and shot her down lak a dog. What dey got against us, anyway, dem cruel white folks? I kin never understand it. *(Rises and brushes his face. Wearily.)* Folkses, it's no use. Dis reminds me of somethin' I couldn't forgit. I gotta go home. I gotta see mah own mammy in Harlem, and my wife Sally and mah baby, Honey Lou.

ALL (*mournfully*). Sam, Sam, President Sam!

ANGEL. Sam Pickens, you can't leave now with everything just beginning here. And are you going to leave me?

SAM. No use, Miss Angel, I'm rememberin' again.

ANGEL. But your wife never understood you. You'll be happy with me.

SAM. I gotta go back to mah own people.

ALL. Don't go, Sam. You're our President. We can't do without you. Sam, Sam, President Sam!

SAM. Folks, it's no use. I'll come back and bring mah fambly here tomorrow, to live in Hoboken and be free. Think I'd give up the finest job I eveh had in mah life? But I jes' gotta go. (*Takes off his gaudy robes and puts on his old coat again and starts shuffling.*)

ALL. Sam, Sam, what'll we do without President Sam?

SAM. Jes' gotta go, Harlem. My own people.

ALL. Sam, Sam, President Sam!

(*A mournful dance as they wave their hands at him, and he shuffles off. Then a lively finale and*

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE I

Harlem, just 25 years later. Evening.

The same cross-section of tenement and street as in the first act, but vastly more angular, confusing, colorful and jazzy; a composition of sharp, outrageous lines, an ensemble of militant statements by a drunken geometrician. This is Industrialism rampant. This is the New Harlem—the new America. And the old tenement where SAM used to live is much taller now and has a wonderfully ornate lobby titled, "The New World." The former saloon has been converted into a gilded cabaret, with an electric sign reading:

BUTLER'S CAVE OF JOY
BEST CABARET IN HARLEM

The former revival hall has been converted into another cabaret, as gilded and rococo, with the sign:

ROSEWATER'S FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH
BEST CABARET ON EARTH

There are a window and balcony over the entrance to each cabaret.

Also the scene is cut by half a dozen other planes or platforms, on which groups of actors, designated later as PLANES, are to sing and dance. Advertising signs are scattered over the buildings and swung from the sky. They are everywhere. A confusion of signs, criss-crossing, assailing and charging upon each other in a dynamic war for the readers' attention: Change Your Garters! Jesus Saves! Cascarets Help! Madame's Face Bleach! Hair Straightener! Diamonds! Near-Beer! World on the Instalment Plan! Back to Africa! Ivory Soap Floats! Eat Grape Nuts! America First! Beauty Parlor! Jackie Coogan, in 100%—

As curtain rises, there are seen and heard:

A tall traffic cop standing in the center of the stage by a stop and go sign, turned to the word GO.

An outbreak of futurist city music in the style of Edgar Varese. Horns, gongs, sirens, whistles, bells, flat wheels, scrapings, squealings, the bull-roads of the elevated trains.

The traffic cop directs this clamor with his white gloves, like an orchestral conductor. Whirling colored lights splash on him, and shift to the PLANES, where the groups are doing strange jazz poses.

Then, after a minute of this, a funny little burlesque Ford car rolls in, honking its horn in distress, and swerving from side to side, to escape its pursuer, who is none other than CHILL MCGREGOR, now old, shabby and white-haired. The cop turns sign to STOP, and there is quiet.

CHILL. Git a hawss! Git a hawss!

COP (grabbing him). Hey you, whut's up now?

FORDIST. Dis ole man's been pussicutin' me, officer. Arrest him.

COP. Whaffor he pussicute you, Henry?

FORDIST. Ah dunno—I nevuh done him nuthin', didn't even run ovah him, officer, or nuthin'. Arrest him!

COP (*peering and then laughing*). Oh no, dis is only poor ole Chill McGregor; he's jest drunk again, dat's all. Everyone know Chill; I'll take care of him. Run along now, Henry Ford. (*Ford car leaves.*)

CHILL (*feebly trying to follow*). Git a hawss! Git a hawss!

COP (*shaking him, humorously*). Heah, quit dat, you ole piece of bootlegger's meat! You can't go round insultin' automobiles dat way, unnerstand?

CHILL. But I'm a hoss-cah philosopher.

COP (*laughing good naturedly*). And you're jes twenty-five years behind de times.

PLANES (*chanting in unison*).

Yes, twenty-five years behind the times!

Twenty-five years behind the times!

(CHILL *looks about him confusedly*.)

COP (*roaring with laughter*). A hoss-cah philosopher he calls hissself, ho, ho, ho! Ole man, don't you know hosses belong to de past? (*Earnestly.*) And de past is dead, ole man, it's done; it's absolutely, completely ruined; it wuz run over by a ten-ton auto-truck; it wuz pushed from the sixtieth floor of a skyscraper and got smashed. (*Excitedly.*) Yes, an aeroplane bombed it to pieces; a dynamo electrocuted it; a flapper and a banker buried it; it's under the daisies; even radio can't reach it no more. De past is dead, I say. Money is the big word now! Grab it, get it, steal it, borrow it; sell out your brother and sister; start a war for it; swap de sun and de moon for it; give up race and religion; you gotter have it, ole man; money is de big word now. (*Mops his brow.*) Whew, guess I'll go git me a pail of ice-water, I'm so excited. (*Leaves.*)

CHILL (*feebly*). Git a hawss!

PLANES (*chanting and jazzing*).

Money is the big word now.

Twenty-five years behind the times!

Money, money, money, that's the big word now!

1ST PLANE. Come on up, Chill, and git a drink of fire-water.

2ND PLANE. Real modern, too—only made ten minutes ago.

3RD PLANE. Whiskey dat'll grow you a new set of teeth, ole man.

CHILL. Suah, suah, dat's me. (*He goes toward them, but stumbles and falls asleep.*)

PLANES (*laughing and hooting*).

Gone asleep again,

Twenty-five years behind the times.

1ST PLANE. Bootlegging!

2ND PLANE. Prize-fighting!

3RD PLANE. Lottery!

4TH PLANE. Real estate!

5TH PLANE. Politics!

ALL PLANES. Yes, money is the big word now!

Get rich quick, get rich quick!

Money, money, money!

(*A burst of jazz; they dance.* BUTLER and ROSEWATER enter.)

SCENE II

BUTLER. I'm jes' about plumb disgusted wid you, Mistuh Rosewater. Stealin' my cabaret crowd dat way last night.

ROSEWATER. Why not, Mistuh Butler? Business means cuttin' yoh neighbor's throat, don't it? And I'm a good business man, I am, and a fust class artistic throat-cutter, I am.

BUTLER. But yuh do everything jes' to spite me. Fust I leave my undertakin' business, and open a cabaret, jes to make money. Den yoh leave yo' preachin' business and open a cabaret opposite me. Den I git grand attractions and vaudeville at great expense. So den you go out and git grander and more expensive ones. We used to cooperate

before, when I wuz an undertaker, and you a preacher, now you're out to bankrupt me. What you want, anyway?

ROSEWATER (*cooly*). I want to be your step son-in-law.

BUTLER. You old goat, you still want to marry Honey Lou? What you want a gal half yo' age, anyway?

ROSEWATER. I ain't old, and I ain't a goat—I'm human. And I want a young gal to frisk around wid, and to hang my diamonds on. I'm a he-flapper, I am; I'm real modern—a son of 1927—

BUTLER (*interrupting him*). Oh, hogwash! Listen, Rosewater, let's cut dis foolishment. You kin take Honey Lou—I told her tonight she has got to marry you or git out of my house. Does dat satisfy you?

ROSEWATER. Yes and no. I'll be satisfied when she actually hands me a marriage sitificate, all in black and white. De day after dat I'll sell you my cabaret and go out to be an alderman—dat's my ambition now—moah money in it, Butler!

BUTLER. But can't you quit dis-heah competition meanwhile? Ain't we friends?

ROSEWATER. Sure we're friends—sure—'cept where money's concerned.

BUTLER. An' I used to think ministers wuz so unselfish! You're as unselfish as a hippopotamus—you is. Come on, Oswald. (*His son, now his press agent, with a megaphone, follows him into the cabaret.*) Gawd, ef I could only git another good vaudeville act—dat would finish him! (*Exit.*)

ROSEWATER (*chuckling*). An' I used to think undertakers wuz so sorry for everyone. Sorry as monkeys they are. (*Goes into his door, followed by his press agent.*) Hot skunk, if I kin git another good vaudeville stunt dat'll finish him! (*Exit.*)

PLANES. Money, money, money!

SCENE III

(*Enter SAM PICKENS, shuffling with coat over his arm, and staring about him bewilderedly.*)

SAM. I must be lost. Been walkin' and walkin', but ain't found mah street yet. Been roamin' everywhere, and

ain't found even Harlem! Everything's so queer. (*A shout from the PLANES.*) Lookit dem, so busy makin' money. Everything's so big and fast here, nawthin' but automobiles, and even de cops look different. What's happened? Ah must be in a strange part of town. And I'm tired—I want to find mah fambly. Well, guess I'd better shuffle de ole dogs some more.

(*Another shout, then a pandemonium of fighting, and the PLANES rush down and surround him.*)

1ST PLANE. I saw him fust! Wanna buy some gin?

2ND PLANE. I saw him fust! Ticket for de lottery?

3RD PLANE. He's mine. Bet on a prize-fight?

4TH PLANE. Let me at him! Buy some lots in Florida?

5TH PLANE. Vote for Pinkroot for Sheriff! He's a good feller!

(*Sam, bewildered, tries to slip through their fingers, but they corner him.*)

SAM. Please, please. Let me go! I ain't buying nawthin' today, and I ain't votin' or nawthin'.

PLANES. Ain't our licker good enough fer you? Our real estate? Politics? Gambling? Sporting?

SAM. I ain't buyin' nawthin'—I'm lookin' fer somethin'—

PLANES. Get rich quick!

1ST PLANE. Don't you wanter get rich quick?

PLANES. Get rich quick, get rich quick?

SAM. No, really, thanks. I'm jes' lookin' fer mah home. Kin you tell me, brothers, where 135th Street and 7th Avenue is?

PLANES (*roaring with laughter*). Why you're standin' on it right now.

SAM (*looking about*). Dat ain't true. It can't be true.

PLANES. It is true.

SAM (*with great positiveness*). It ain't. You're all crazy.

PLANES (*as they suddenly break into a mad whirling, leaping and chanting*). Money, money, money, money!

SAM (*alarmed and starting to leave*). Dey suttinly is crazy. Guess I'd better slip away.

1ST PLANE (*grabbing him*). Heah, why ain't you dancin'?

wid us? Ain't you been Americanized yet? Don't you believe in money?

SAM. No, suh, I don't.

1ST PLANE (*shouting to others*). He don't, he don't believe in money! (*They stop dancing and crowd around SAM again.*) He don't, don't, don't believe in money! Hot damn!

1ST PLANE. What do you believe in?

SAM (*impressively*). Brothers, ah believe in Hoboken. I'm de President of de Hoboken factory.

PLANES (*hooting*). A President. A President.

1ST PLANE (*sneering*). Whaddya mean, Hoboken, anyway? Dat's jes a dirty railroad dump cross de river, ain't it?

SAM. Brothers, it's music. Money ain't de onliest thing in de world, brothers. I learned better dan dat—I had a big lesson. I gotter go and find my fambly now, but later I'll come back and make you-all a speech and den you'll know—

PLANES. Speech, Speech. Make us a speech, President.

SAM. Later, later! (*He tries to go, but they grab him.*)

PLANES. No, now. Git him a soap-box. Take him down de corner. Speech, soap-box. (*Then lift him up in their arms and carry him out.*) President! Soap-box! Speech!

SAM (*protesting*). My fambly—(*Exits.*)

1ST PLANE. Dis is gonner be a lot of fun, hey Zeke?

2ND PLANE. You bet. (*They follow the crowd.*)

SCENE IV

(*A young man and woman, HONEY LOU and LIL JOE, enter and stand on the tenement stoop.*)

JOE. We must wait just another year, my darling,—my dark beautiful girl.

HONEY LOU. But, Joe, don't be angry if I ask, why? Haven't we waited now since we were children—over twenty years?

JOE. Yes, twenty years, my Honey Lou, and that's why we can wait another year. We must first make ourselves into something.

HONEY LOU. Make ourselves into what?

JOE. You know as well as I, Lou. You must finish with your music studies, and I must have another year with the books. It's our duty.

HONEY LOU. I wish I had your strength and faith, Joe.

JOE. You have it—you must have it. For it is not our strength, but the strength of our race. We must be strong because we are to be the spokesmen of a race.

HONEY LOU. I'm only strong through you, Joe.

JOE. And I am strong through you. But our love must be stronger than both of us—it must reach out into the world, don't you see, my darling? If we married now it would interfere with what we want to do. And we have such a glorious task before us—an historic mission.

HONEY LOU (*sighing*). Yes, yes.

JOE. Oh, my darling, to think that only five years ago I was like so many others, just content to live idly from day to day—just a pullman porter, a truck-driver, a dishwasher—black flotsam drifting on America's tides. And then I awoke to the books and became a man, I learned to think. Honey Lou, I am going to speak for the black workers; and I must speak with the voice of history. That's why I must study more. I must find myself as a writer and thinker. Oh, but it's glorious, Honey Lou—think of it—my poor father had the same impulses to thought and study as I have, but people made a joke of it twenty-five years ago when a Negro workingman read books and tried to think his way out of America's jungles. But now the dawn has come; Ethiopia is opening her heavy-lidded eyes; thousands of our young men and women are preparing a new renaissance; and I am one of them. No one can laugh at the Negro thinkers and artists any more—they fear and respect us—and we respect ourselves—for we are on the threshold of a new world!

HONEY LOU (*bursting into tears*). Joe, I hate to tell you—you don't understand—

JOE. What's wrong, Honey Lou? You frighten me; you've never acted this way before.

HONEY LOU. I hate to spoil your dreams—but we must marry now, or maybe never.

JOE. Tell me why; don't be afraid; I'm not up in the clouds; I'm not afraid of reality.

HONEY LOU. Joe, Mistuh Butler is trying to marry me off to that detestable Rosewater.

JOE. He is?

HONEY LOU. Yes, this morning he said he'd put me out of the house if I didn't marry that man.

JOE. The dirty dog! The swollen parasite! Rosewater and Butler are the symbols of the thing I'm going to spend my life fighting. I see I am really up in the clouds, Honey Lou, for I never knew this before. But of course, there's only one thing to do, my dear. Go upstairs and pack your things. I'll go and get mine.

HONEY LOU. And then what?

JOE. We're off to be married.

HONEY LOU. Darling! (*They kiss.*) But what'll become of poor mother?

JOE. She'll understand. Go on, dear, hurry. (*They kiss again, and part.*) Now we'll meet the dawn together, Honey Lou. . . . (*Exit both, HONEY LOU into tenement.*)

SCENE V

(*The Cabaret Balconies. BUTLER with his son OSWALD with megaphone appear on one balcony.*)

BUTLER. Now snap into it, Oswald; give 'em all de language yo' got, and git dat crowd! Git it!

1ST PRESS AGENT (*through megaphone.*) Step forward! Yoo-hoo-hoo! Alagazam! Kanye, kanye, kanye, madoda! (*A crowd appears.*) Yes, step forward, ladies and gentlemen! Don't cost ye nuthin'—don't be bashful. Ooze forward—percolate in dis direction! (*They are nearer.*) Open dem golden doors down dere, and give dese poor sinners a taste of heaven! (*The cabaret doors are opened, and a blare of jazz shoots out; then the doors are shut again; the people sway slightly to the music.*) Ain't dat great? Dat's

music, folks—de 14-karat brand, sweet as honey in de comb, wild as de wild goats of Jamaica. Don't it tickle yo' pin-feathers? Don't you wanna holler, don't you wanna dance, don't you wanna sing, don't you wanna moan? Kiss me, red-hot mommer, my shoes is burnin'. I got a million dollars, 10,000 years to live, nuthin' to worry about, and two fine dancin' feet! Dat's music! Step right inside, peepul, it's all free, free, free!

(The music plays again, and the crowd jazzes toward the door. Suddenly on the other balcony ROSEWATER appears with his press-agent.)

2ND PRESS AGENT *(through megaphone)*. Wait, halt! Reflect! Hesitate! Don't make no errors. Don't make no mistakes. Come to de best cabaret in Harlem. Dem false-alarms over dere ain't got music, and I kin prove it. Open dem *diamond* doors down dere! *(The doors open, and a blare of fierce jazz shoots out.)* No, dat ain't music, peepul, dat's jazz. Folks, I said Jazz! What de colored angels play when Gawd gets blue, when He's tired of hearin' dem mournful white-man harps all day. Jazz, de sweet crazy poison dat brought Christopher Columbus a-huntin' foh America! Wilder dan bootleg—more powerful dan a million sugar kisses! Oh Mistuh, Mistuh, you kin take mah wife, throw mah seven babies in de river, fire me fum mah good job, but leave me mah raving, cravin', prancin', dancin' Jazz! Come on, peepul, it's free, free, free!

(More music, and the crowd jazzes toward his door; then toward the other, as each press agent shouts in turn.)

1ST PRESS AGENT. Deir jazz band is full of prune juice.

2ND PRESS AGENT. Deir waiters is all bandy-legged, short-changers—

1ST PRESS AGENT. Deir rum is varnish and molasses. Our's real.

2ND PRESS AGENT. Their Scotch is fasset water. Our's real.

1ST PRESS AGENT. Don't go dere—his boss wuz a preacher.

2ND. His boss wuz an undertaker—you ain't corpses, is you?

1ST. We got de best vaudeville show in town.

2ND. We got de best in de world.

1ST. Listen, folks; at great and heart-breakin' expense we has secured de Jazzbo Brothers, dancers foh dis week. (*Unfurls a banner with this legend.*)

2ND. Peepul: at de cost of a roll dat would strangle a subway station we have engaged The Only Abie, Harlem's Black Swan. (*Unfurls a rival banner.*)

1ST. Hot Dog Johnson, tramp comedian. (*Unfurls rapidly.*)

2ND. Frisco Slim, magician. (*Also unfurling name after name rapidly.*)

1ST. Bobo, unparalleled Goldfish Trainer.

2ND. Rudolph, inimitable Lion-faced Boy.

1ST. Percival, the Intellectual Monkey.

2ND. Charles Lindbergh, Champeen.

1ST. Napoleon, Super-Champeen.

2ND. Cleopatra, the Oriental Dancer.

1ST. Helen of Troy.

2ND. Adam and Eve.

1ST. The Devil Himself.

(*They are interrupted in this orgiastic rivalry by a noisy parade. A crowd enters, singing exultantly the SAM PICKENS song, I Wanna Job in Hoboken. They carry torches of red fire, and are led by a man beating a bass drum. SAM PICKENS is in their midst, borne aloft on the arms of some men, and smiling broadly, as if he were enjoying himself. The crowd cheers and laughs uproariously, but they are mocking SAM, though he doesn't seem to know it.*)

SCENE VI

CROWD. President of Hoboken! Hooray! Speech! Speech!

1ST PLANE (*shouting*). What's the matter wid de only man in America who don't care for money?

CROWD (*in response*). He's all right!

1ST PLANE. Three cheers for the Negro President of Hoboken!

CROWD. Hooray, hooray, hooray! (*Then they laugh.*)
Haw, haw, haw!

1ST PLANE (*bursting with ill-concealed laughter*). And now you gotter give us anuther soap-box speech, and we'll let yuh go.

SAM. Now folkses, really I ain't much good at this jaw-wigglin' and wagglin'—

1ST PLANE. We gotter have a speech, or we won't vote for yuh, haw, haw, haw!

SAM. Well, folks, I don't need votes; I'm elected aw-ready, but I guess speechifyin' is part of a President's job, and so I'll do anuther one. But only one. (*Spits on his hands.*)

CROWD. Dat's right; go ahead!

SAM. Folks, I's mighty glad you all is so friendly. We's all brothers, black and white, only de world won't let us act dat way. Got us all hustling and slugging each other for jobs and money—all dem things. Never got time to dance, sing and be friendly, ain't I right?

CROWD. Yes, yes, go on, President!

SAM. Yop, it sure is a crazy world, brothers and sisters, I'm tellin' yuh. But dere's one spot we fixed up so's every-one kin be happy. We call it Hoboken, I'm de President dere, and under my 'ministration we wuhk only tree hours a day. Ain't no money—everyone shares alike—ain't no cops—everyone's his own cop, and arrests hisself when he's about to do somethin' wrong. No bosses dere, neither, we don't need no fat, nasty boss to make us work, cause we likes to work, cause dere's music in de factory all day, and sun-flowers round de factory door.

CROWD. Hooray, rave on, President. Dis is a circus. Haw, haw, haw!

SAM. Well, guess I'll stop now. (*Mops his brow.*)

1ST PLANE. Aw, go on, you ain't told us about fine gals dere.

VOICE. And chicken dinners.

VOICE. And de free gin.

SAM. No, dat's all now, thank you. I'll speechify some more later. Now I'll jest invite you-all to come along and jine us ter-morrer mawnin', when I'm gwine back wid my fambly. Meet me at de Hoboken ferry, and we'll go in a parade. You'll be welcome as June roses dere, folks—dere's room for everyone. You'll like it, too; it's wunnerful; it's a dream. Well, now you gotter show me where my fambly lives.

CROWD. No, another speech. Soap-box! Speech! President!

1ST PLANE. Take him to de next corner.

SAM. But I made four speeches awready—

1ST PLANE. A President dassent ever stop fum makin' speeches.

CROWD (*lifting him, and moving along*). Yes, speech, speech!

SAM (*bewildered*). Folks, you's mighty kind—I pre-
ciates dis, but—

CROWD. Speech, speech! (*They break into the Hoboken song, led by the bass drummer; exit.*)

1ST PLANE (*hopefully*). Less foller some more, hey Zeke? Dat ole feller is suah crazy. Mebbe he'll git arrested, haw, haw, haw!

2ND PLANE (*gloomily*). Aw, no he won't. Dem crazy guys is always lucky. Now ef it wuz me—

1ST PLANE. Say, Zeke, jes fer fun, we otter get some barbed-wire and crown him wid a barbed-wire crown! (*Exit.*)

CHILL MCGREGOR (*stirring himself sleepily out of the shadows, and following them slowly*). Dat wuz Sam Pickens—I knew he'd show up in time. O Gawd, dere's so much time in de world—everything kin happen here. Lots of time—nothing but time. (*Shakes himself into further wakefulness.*) My, my, my, an' he's a President now. Who'd have thunk it? Allers knew he's amount to somethin', but a President—my, my, my! I'll go see ef he'll buy me a drink—he being a President now! (*Shuffles out.*)

SCENE VII

(*On the Balconies.*)

BUTLER (*breaking out savagely*). Dere dey go, boum, boum, boum! Dere goes de crowd follerin de drum and de ole crazy man! Now I'm bankrupt fer fair! Damn dese peepul dat'll foller any ole fool who'll give 'em a free laugh! Why don't you say somethin', Oswald?

OSWALD. Ain't nuthin' to say no more. Ain't it?

BUTLER. Yes, and it's your fault, too. Oswald, I's ashamed of you. Ah give yoh de best education money could buy, Eton collars and embalming and religion, but you're a failure. Dat odder press agent wuz weaving circles around yo' wid his language. You don't even know language, you don't!

OSWALD. Aw, there you go again. I'm sick of your grouches.

BUTLER. But I'm bankrupt—I'm ruined—heah, where you sneakin' out to?

OSWALD. Goin' to see my gal.

BUTLER. No chorus gal dates tonight, not ef I know it! You put your white coat on and git downstairs and wait on table. Go down now—I'll disown you ef you don't!

OSWALD (*like the small boy of first act*). Aw, I wanna have some fun! (*Exit.*)

ROSEWATER (*on other balcony*). Eee-yah, ee-ha, now we got ole Butler licked fer fair. See dat ole crazy feller? Dat wuz Sam Pickens, worth one hundred thousand dollars in publicity to us! Foller him at once, and give him dis mesage from Rosewater's Fountain of Youth Cabaret—(*Exit.*)

SCENE VIII

Inside BUTLER's home in the tenement, formerly SAM's. Much more high-tone and ostentatious than before. SALLY is in bed, sick; she coughs painfully, and drinks from a glass of water.

SALLY. Honey Lou, Honey Lou, where are you?

HONEY LOU (*coming in*). Here I am, mammy.

SALLY. What yo doin' out dere in de hall?

HONEY LOU. I was expecting someone, mammy.

SALLY. Don't leave me again, Honey Lou. I'm feelin' pow'ful bad today; feel lak I wuz goin' to die; all chocked up again. Git me nuther glass of water, baby.

HONEY LOU. Yes, mammy; don't worry, mammy.

(*Goes out and brings it back.*)

SALLY. Who wuz you expectin' out dere?

HONEY LOU. I'll tell you later when he comes, mammy. Later. It's a surprise!

SALLY. A surprise! But it won't be my poor Sam to surprise me, baby. I know dat. Oh, your poor daddy, Honey Lou; I dreamed of him again last night; I heerd him singing in his soft voice, and I felt so glad.

HONEY LOU. He was a nice man, wasn't he, Mammy?

SALLY. Yes, he was, even if I 'bused him all de time. He had one fault; he could nevah find a job; but he was a good man, a kind man; not hard like Mistuh Butler. My poor easy-goin' Sam!

HONEY LOU. Don't cry, mammy.

SALLY. Yes, I'm a sick useless old woman now, but I kin hear my Sam's low voice singing, and I feel young again, and de sun is shinin', and de sky is blue, and de sunflowers is all yellow round our cabin door. Mebbe I'm gwine to die soon, Honey Lou, and see your poor daddy again; I feel dat way.

HONEY LOU. Mammy, mammy, don't take on so— (JOE has meanwhile appeared on stage, gone into tenement, and up the stairs, and now his whistle is heard at the door. HONEY LOU goes to meet him.) Just a minute, Mammy.

JOE. Have you got your things packed yet?

HONEY LOU. No, Mammy's been feelin' bad, and I haven't had the heart to tell her.

JOE. Let's tell her together. (*Steps in.*)

SALLY. Who dat? I kin hardly see today.

JOE. It's me, Aunt Sally, it's Lil Joe.

SALLY. Oh, Lil Joe, Lil Joe! Well, I'm right glad to see yo. Come here! Such a big strappin' smart handsome

man you've become, and I used to carry you round in my arms, and smack yo' face when you played tricks on me. And now you come to see dis sick useless ole woman again! A big handsome man!

SALLY (*whispers fearfully*). But don't stay long, Joe; you know how mad Mistuh Butler is at yoh. He'd throw you out ef he found you heah.

JOE. Aunt Sally—

HONEY LOU (*kneeling by the bed*). Mammy—

SALLY. Whut is it? Whut's wrong?

JOE. Don't excite yourself, Aunt Sally, but Honey Lou and I have decided to go off and get married.

SALLY. Married?

HONEY LOU. Yes, mammy; I'm not going to marry that silly old Rosewater. It's ridiculous to even think of it; I'd rather be dead.

JOE. We love each other, aunty, we've always loved each other deeply.

HONEY LOU. We'll be poor, but I'd rather starve with Joe, than eat off gold dishes with Mr. Rosewater.

SALLY. You love each other—

JOE. Yes, we do.

SALLY. Dat's right; you should love each other, my chil-lun— But what'll I do here all alone? What'll become of me? (*Sobs bitterly—curtain falls.*)

SCENE IX

(SAM and CHILL rush in, as if pursued, looking backwards like runaways.)

SAM. My, my, dat mob like to tore me to pieces. Dey suttinly wuz friendly and nice, but we's lucky we escaped. It's tough to be a President! I'm glad you found me. (CHILL flops down on the curbing.) What's de matter, Chill, you ain't tired again, is you?

CHILL (*dreamily*). No, I ain't tired, but my feet is sore. I stood on de hawss-cars too long.

SAM (*worried*). Come on, Chill, please don't take no more rest now. Take me home, Chill.

CHILL. Dere's time, President—de world has lots of time.

SAM. But I jes can't wait—I feel so lost, so queer. I can't reckernize nuthin'—even you look different, Chill. I hardly knew you when you come up to shake my hand in de crowd. You been drinkin' all day, ain't yo, an' rollin' round de bar-rooms since I left this mawnin'?

CHILL. Yes.

SAM. Dats what it is. Nevah even went back to de hawss-cah job, you ole flapdoodle bum, dija?

CHILL. No. (*Music sounds.*)

SAM. Well, lead me home now. Whut's dat? Sounds like de sukkus music.

CHILL. Dey call it jazz.

SAM. Everything's so queer. Please, Chill, let's move—
(*He sits down beside CHILL. A procession goes past; first, couples jazzing across the stage; then Garveyites in robes, with banners reading, Back to Africa! A quartette of young Negro students, in academic caps and gowns, chanting softly; then the PLANES, repeating Money, money, money! Then two Negro actors; with masks of tragedy and comedy; then a group of children, doing the Charleston; then a dancer all in red, with a Red Liberty cap.*)

CHILL. Harlem! Harlem! Look at Harlem, Sam!

SAM. I kin hardly reckernize it. Lookit dem big signs up dere—nevuh saw dem befoh. Cabaret—whut does dat mean? Electric lights, and de houses so tall, and de streets so crowded. Dis can't be Harlem—Harlem wuz a hawss-cah, but dis is a locomotive express train. Come on, Chill, get up. You ain't fell asleep again, has you? (*Shakes him.*)

CHILL (*starts to cry weakly*). Sam, Sam, I'm good-for-nawthin no more.

SAM. Why, Chill—

CHILL. Peepul laugh at me—my brain don't work somehow—I can't remember things—I'm lost in de fog, Sam—

SAM. Fog? Why, Chill, you's de smartest philosophizin' man in Harlem you is. And everything you told me 'bout Hoboken come out jest de way you said it would. Even dat Angel gal.

CHILL. And you really are a President?

SAM. Sure I am; think I'd lie?

CHILL. And dere' singin' birds dere?

SAM. Lil red, yellow and green birds, sure—sweetest music in de world, and dey fetch you fruit when you crave it—oranges and peaches and lil cherries.

CHILL. And nobody's hungry?

SAM. Gwan, why should dey be? Go into any house you meet in Hoboken, and set right down and eat all you want—pork chops and yams and biscuits an' rice pudding—and Chill, good beer all yo' want, flowing right fum de kitchen fasset.

CHILL. Only three hours' work?

SAM. Dat's all. De rest of de time we spend dancin', singin', and lookin' up at de Sun and yellin' to Him to come down and have a jolly evenin' wid us. Jes like you wuz philosfizin' so often, Chill. We're brudders. Dere's no money dere. De factory has sunflowers round de door. It's like heaven.

CHILL (*bursting into sobs*). Sam, Sam, I wanna job dere, too!

SAM. Why suah, Chill—suttinly—

(*Soft Hoboken song music, their voices trail off, as the spotlight shifts from them to the tenebrous house again, where the door opens, and MR. BUTLER enters the flat.*)

SCENE X

SALLY (*screaming*). It's Mr. Butler.

BUTLER. Yes, it's me, and whut you-all up to, anyway? Whut's dis loafer doin' heah?

SALLY. He's visitin'.

BUTLER (*shouting*). Don't want no such lazy, shifless atheist visitors heah, dat spends their time writin' poetry, and ain't got time foh honest work. Git out. Whut you got in dat bag, Louisa?

HONEY LOU. My belongings.

BUTLER. Dey ain't yours—dey're mine—I paid for dem. Where you gwine wid dem?

JOE (*quietly*). Enough of this shouting now, Mr. Butler. Honey-Lou is coming with me—to be married.

BUTLER. Married, married? To a wuthless public li-berry bum like you who nevuh had a nickel and is de son of a drunken hoss-car driver?

JOE. Yes. And don't insult my father. He's better than a hundred like youself.

BUTLER. But I'm her rightful parent—I brung her up—I paid her music study bills—she haster marry Rosewater, I say—

JOE. Come on, Honey Lou, or this old bootlegger'll have a hemorrhage or something.

BUTLER (*screaming*). Git out of my house all of you! I'm through wid you-all!

HONEY LOU. We're going—glad to.

BUTLER. And take Sally wid you, too. I don't want none of you.

SALLY. But I'm sick—I'll be a burden to them—

BUTLER. Take her, take de ole woman; she's no use to me no more.

SALLY. I worked hard for you for twenty-five years and now you turn me out dis way?

BUTLER. Yes, take her along; see wedder you kin support her, too, on your poetry and books.

JOE. Mr. Butler, money is your god, and may he reward you well.

BUTLER. Take her, take her.

SALLY (*springing up from the bed*). Yes, take me, I'd rather die than live with him another minute! Take me!

SCENE XI

(*The light switches back to SAM and CHILL on the curb-ing.*)

SAM. Chill, Chill, you've gone to sleep on me again.

CHILL. No, I'm lissenin', Sam.

SAM. Yo jes gotter lead me home, Chill,—you must, do you hear? We's all rested now, ain't we? Your feet an' all—

CHILL. No, jess one minute. Sam, tell me whut kind street cahs dey got in Hoboken. Hoss-cah, ain't dey?

SAM. I'll tell you later, Chill; fust you must lead me home. I can't wait no more. (*Stands up and leads CHILL by the hand.*) Where is it? Where's mah house, anyway? I can't seem to git mah bearings. Where is it, Chill?

CHILL (*looking about him hazily*). Ah guess dat's it, Sam.

SAM. Dis one? You suah drunk, Chill, cause dat ain't it. Dat's a palace.

CHILL. I ain't suah of nuthin', but dat's it, Sam, hones.

SAM. Can't be. Can't be. It's so big, so grand.

(*They walk toward the house slowly, and stop when they see SALLY come out of the tenement sobbing, supported on either side by JOE and LOU.*)

SCENE XII

SALLY. He turned me out lak a dog. De low-down man! After all dese years—after I give up so much for him—

JOE. That's all right Aunt Sally; we'll take care of you now.

SALLY. But I'll be a drag on you; I'm sick and useless—(*Sobs.*)

SAM. Is dat Sally? Kin dat be Sally? Look, Chill, maybe I can't see straight tonight.

CHILL. Dat's her.

SAM. But she ain't de same. She ain't bawlin' no one out—she's sick an' cryin'. No, dat ain't Sally. (*Goes nearer.*) But maybe it is. Somethin' de matter wid me—it is Sally. (*Goes up with an exaggerated casualness.*) Howdy, Sally, what you cryin' about, anyway? No one's been bossin' you round, has they?

SALLY. Sam?

SAM (*with affected gaiety*). Yop, dat's me. Sorry I'm late, Sally, but I got de job, anyway. Dat job in Hoboken—de finest in de world, too, better dan I told yuh even.

SALLY. Am I crazy? Is it really you?

SAM. Course it me, who you think it is? Whut you all

look dat way at me? Ah know ah done wrong stayin' out so late, but dey kept me foh de elections. Dey made me a President, you know—dat's mah job. Ah got a real job at last—ee-yah, copesetic—we'll be on Easy Street now, Sally, lak I done told you. Where's Honey Lou? I come to git de both of you, to come back wid me! Whut's de matter, heah, anyway?

HONEY LOU. I'm Honey Lou.

SAM. You? A growed up young lady?

HONEY LOU. Are you my daddy who disappeared twenty-five years ago?

SAM (*frightened*). Disappeared? I ain't disappeared—I'm here, ain't I? I wuz only kept late foh de elections. You're wrong, Lady—you can't be Honey Lou.

SALLY (*flinging herself upon him*). Yes, yes, it's my Sam—my Sam. Where have you been all dese years, Sam? I've missed you. (*Kisses him.*)

SAM. All dese years. And Sally kissin' me! Whut's up? Are you all funnin' me—or lyin'?

JOE. You've been away twenty-five years.

SAM. Chill, you tell me de truth. How long I been away?

CHILL. It don't matter—de world has lots of time.

SAM (*tearfully*). I come home to mah fambly, and dey make fun of me, I'll go back to Hoboken an'—

SALLY. Sam, don't you know—

HONEY LOU (*showing him a mirror*). See, daddy, your hair is gray.

SAM (*tragically*). Yes, yes, mah Gawd, it's gray. And now I kin see you're Honey Lou. And dis is Lil Joe, ain't it? Grown-up, both of you. I've been away twenty-five years den, and I thought it wuz only a day. Oh, mah Lawd, my sweet sufferin' Christ!

SALLY. Don't take on so, Sam.

SAM. But it's all a dream, den—Dose cops hit me on de head, and I musta been going around empty-headed for 25 years. An dere ain't no Hoboken, and I ain't a President!

CHILL (*loyally*). Sure, you are.

SAM. No, no. I see it straight now, at last. I'm jes' a crazy ole man and everyone's been laffin' at me.

HONEY LOU (*putting her arms about him*). Daddy, don't take on so—it doesn't matter—

SAM. Don't kiss me, Honey Lou. Yoh daddy ain't good enough to find a job. I'm not a President—jes an ole wuthless crazy nigger. Why didn't dem cops kill me, stead of lettin' me live? I knew dere wuz a ketch somewhere—it wuz all too good to be true. (*Starts to cry.*) Nuthin' good lak dat happens to poor Niggers in America!

SALLY (*trying to embrace*). Sam, Sam, you're back with us, anyway.

SAM (*staggering away, and weaving like a drunken man*). No, Sally. I'm no good. Come on, Chill. Less go and drown ourselves. Dere ain't no use livin' no moh. Where's my twenty-five years gone—my twenty-five years? Yesterday I wuz young, easy-going Sam Pickens, and to-day I'm a foolish ole man wid gray hair. I done nuthin' I thought I done. A dream. Strong colored man wanted. Ringmaster and de sukkus. Dat sweet Angel who wuz dancin'. Spartycuss. De factory and de elections. Sunflowers round de door. I wuz a President. Now I'm a crazy old Harlem Nigger dat peepul laff at. I wanter die, Chill. I wanter die. Cause dere ain't—no, dere ain't—dere ain't—no city of Hoboken in dis world! It's a dream! (*He collapses.*)

SALLY (*kneels and kisses him*). Sam, Sam, nevu mind about Hoboken—you got us, ain't you?

CHILL. President, de world has lots more time. Time for dreams—time for Hoboken—

(*The bursting strains of the band, and many voices singing the Hoboken song. The crowd appears, led by drum, etc., with ROSEWATER's press agent at head. He rushes to SAM, and tries to rouse him, flashing a slip of paper and a huge fountain pen before his face.*)

PRESS AGENT. Sam Pickens! Sam Pickens!

SALLY. Dat's his name.

PRESS AGENT. Wake up, Sam Pickens, dis is Opportunity knocking at yo' door! (*SAM wakes.*) Sam Pickens, here's yo' chance at last to make a mountain of money, money, money!

CROWD. Money, money, money!

SAM (*groaning*). But Hoboken—

PRESS AGENT (*very rapidly*). Mr. Rosewater authorizes me, Mr. Pickens, to offer you the sum of two hundred dollars a week as our star vaudeville attraction in de cabaret. You are worth barrels of publicity—you'll be getting thousands per week before you're thru—your fortune's made—you'll get rich quick—de newspapers'll go mad over you with more space than a divorce, murder or war—Lazarus, risen from de dead, in a banjo solo and talk on hell—Rip Van Winkle in a song and dance and travelogue—Jesus Christ, crowned wid barbed wire, in a snappy American monologue—two hundred a week; do you accept?

SAM (*in a strong voice*). NO! (*The CROWD repeats incredulously "NO"; SAM falls back, and in a weak, defeated voice.*) Yes, I accept.

PRESS AGENT (*through megaphone*). He accepts.

(*The CROWD takes up the cry. He accepts! He accepts! And then dances and sings. SAM goes with his family into cabaret, and re-appears on the balcony, while the following takes place. Two couples jazz out in front of CROWD.*)

JAZZERS.

Gay and red-hot is the moment,
Life is one long lazy day,
Lynching, terror, white man's madness,
Harlem jazes them away.

CROWD. Harlem! Harlem! (*Dances. Garveyites in robes and with banner; BACK TO AFRICA!*)

GARVEYITES (*in deep rolling bass*).

Gather up the people for the journey home.
Leave the fields and factories, ten million strong.
Black men, O black men, across the ocean's foam,
Africa awaits us, our land of sun and song.

CROWD. Harlem, Harlem! (*Dance.*)

(*Young children dancing the Charleston.*)

CHILDREN.

Life's just begun, life's just begun,
America's ours; and we'll find our fun.
Grow up here, or grow up there,
Us kids could grow up anywhere!

CROWD. Harlem! Harlem!
(Students in caps and gowns.)

STUDENTS.

America, O step-mother, you struck us from the
 light,
 You made us slaves and clowns, you kept us in
 our place.
 But History has spoken, and breaking thru the
 night,
 We artists and thinkers shall bless our martyred
 race.

CROWD. Harlem! Harlem!
(The PLANES come forward.)

PLANES.

Money, money, git de money.
 Snatch it, steal it, grab it, honey.
 Listen Harlem, ole America said,
 Get rich quick, or you'll all be dead.

CROWD. Harlem! Harlem!

(The CROWD breaks forth into a wild and furious jazzing. Then the PRESS AGENT on the balcony ballyhoos through his megaphone, and SAM PICKENS, with a banjo, steps forward. He lifts his hand; and there is a hush over the CROWD.)

SAM. I wuz cracked on de head; I ain't a President; it wuz all a dream. I lost twenty-five years in a dream; dere ain't no Hoboken like I dreamed. But, folks, why can't there be a place for de poor men, black and white, where birds sing sweet, and every house is full of music, and dere's sunflowers round de factory door? Where no one is hungry, where no one is lynched, where dere's no money or bosses, and men are brudders?

(He plays his Hoboken song suddenly, and sings; and the CROWD sings with him, very fast and lively. The stage is filled with jazzing, singing couples as the curtain falls, and SAM PICKENS stands solemnly on the balcony, leading them in The Hoboken Blues!)

THE END

EDNA LOUISE SMITH

SONNETS

SONNETS OF AN EMPTY HOUSE

You go before me in this empty place,
So close to me, yet ever out of sight.
A stirring curtain whispers of your flight,
A creaking chair takes you in its embrace.
And as I mount the stairs, two at a pace,
On the wide landing, at the casement's height
(Though afterward dissolved into pure light)
I catch a moment's vision of your face.

These four walls know you, close you, hold you in,
Though I can never stand beside you now.
To touch you is an ancient dream grown thin,
Strange, and unreal. Yet what need to vow
I'll not forget you, when a wind-blown bough
Can trace your ruffled hair and firm young chin?

2.

One asks if I am lonely. Thoughtfully,
I answer, "Yes—sometimes—when out of doors."
Between these high white ceilings and these floors
There is no room for loneliness and me.
In my dark, empty hall, inquiringly,
My neighbor looks about her, but ignores
Your passing where the troubled curtain soars;
Her "come to see us" is a kindly plea.

The wind that blows the white clouds through the sky,
The long slope of the lawn down to the street,
That knew so well the pressure of your feet,
Are lonely, lonely. Turning with a sigh,

I leave the window. Silent and discreet,
One flitting shadow marks your going by.

3.

I am not always happy. - Now, as then,
There are untr tranquil moments, restless days.
Love falls to questioning— unhappy maze—
I dream the dream of having you again.
To have you not indeed as other men,
Warm to my touch and vivid in my gaze—
Is that to have? There must be other ways.
I struggle, as of old, with how and when.

But these are passing whims. If I beseech
Your flesh-clothed presence, it will only be
Some nervous impulse stirring fitfully,
Or coursing blood, that wisdom cannot teach.
For in this house you still are close to me,
And you were always just beyond my reach.

A MODERN TRAGEDY

It was a shadow creeping on the sill,
Something she could not see, behind her back.
At first she felt no more than a vague lack,
As when the sun departing leaves a chill.
But day by day it grew and widened still,
Like crumbling stones about a wall's first crack,
Until at length it was a torture rack,
That strained her every nerve and shook her will.

Days were still tranquil, as days always were,
And yet his eyes that pierced her through and through
Seemed now like fingers round a plant that stir
The loosened dirt for roots from which it grew.
Dreadful to think the woman that she knew
Was only half of what he saw in her.

2.

It was a shadow still, one that she cast
But could not see, herself, though she might turn
Ever so quickly. Yet his eyes would burn
Watching that shadow every time she passed.
She felt his world was something strange and vast
Toward which her thoughts at best could only yearn.
And yet she had no wish at all to learn,
Herself, the facts those strange new books amassed.

He never spoke to her of them, or Freud,
Since those first days when his excited speech
Had only left her puzzled and annoyed.
He had more interest to learn than teach;
And so how could he possibly avoid
Using a subject always in his reach?

She was a woman still, of flesh and blood,
And when she was alone in morning hours,
Dusting the chairs or watering the flowers,
She used to pause to crush some soft, full bud,
Or plunge her fingers deep into the mud
Only to try her senses and her powers.
Through open casement she would breathe the showers,
Or let the sunshine bathe her with its flood.

And when her face was flushed, and her soft hair
Strayed on her cheeks, she sought her glass to see
Her old familiar self still mirrored there.
But this warm, glowing, human thing would flee
When he came home, for with him up the stair
And in the door, came unreality.

4.

If she were more to him than what she seemed,
A conscious self and something more beside,
She felt now that the man she knew had died,
Or else this was a waking, having dreamed.
For even when the summer sunshine streamed
Full on his face, he seemed as grey and dried
As some dead leaf. Asleep once, she descried
An old, dry skeleton, and waking, screamed.

And when she had half-heartedly explained
The kind of dream she'd had, and he lay still,
She knew he did not sleep, but only feigned,
While piercing and persistent as a drill
His thoughts went through her thoughts. Silent
and strained,
She felt his mind explore her mind at will.

5.

A woman still—whatever he might be—
Life grew unbearable for her at last.
Could she find strength to break with all the past,
With him she once had loved, and so be free?
Beside her bedroom window was a tree
Whose crisping yellow leaves were falling fast.
She used to set her teeth, the die was cast.
“An end of them, there'll be an end of me.”

A woman still, with courage in despair,
With skin to rend, and solid flesh to bleed,
And will to end the life she could not bear—
Just as she made the ending she decreed,
She wondered if when he should find her there,
He would know all the deep roots of this deed.

THE IMPOSTOR

You were not fairer in your younger days,
I know, although so charily you keep
Those faded memories, not buried deep
For secret joy, but shown in little ways.
In melancholy and romantic haze
The remnants of your summer you would steep,
Prolonging autumn so that you may reap
This poor belated harvest of our praise.

But beauty is no meteor to pass by,
Leaving no trace behind it of its flight.
It is a blazing fire, that gone from sight,
Shows the scorched trees still standing bare and high,
Splendid in all their withering and blight,
Stretching their tragic arms against the sky.

A PAOLO AND FRANCESCA THAT DID NOT DIE AT
GIANCIOTTO'S HAND

They will go down together hand in hand,
And all of life shall pass them as a shade,
The days like shafts of light that gleam and fade
Through the deep thickets of the green-gold land.
And they will have no time to understand,
Since all their length of days is nothing, weighed
With that one swift and changeless choice they made,
Whereby was time rejected and unplanned.

They will go down together, children still,
Who should have died that moment when they chose
To thwart the master, Life, with puny will,
For only so the tragedy should close.
Then give them now for due no judgment chill,
But on cold breasts, one full and fading rose.

MARGERY LATIMER

PENANCE

THE river was ice, frozen in ripples and crests, touched with amber. Beyond rose the hill, blue at night, crusted with snow, and on its incredible arch, the house. Close to the snow, close to the brick walls, the arched windows, grew red berries hanging like drops of blood from black twigs, burning like a sullen fire around and around the house. And inside was a woman in a blood red gown, her face and hands too white, under her eyes shadows like the half-moon, her hair smooth and black as a bat's wing. She walked to the window and closed her eyes until the ice spread out as far as she could see, vast and permanent, and as she stood there she heard the wind come past the island, past the length of timber, over the snow in a sharp, high sweep.

She turned suddenly and walked down the long room toward the fire which burned cone shaped, a golden bush set in a hollow. She went closer and stared into the blaze, put her palms to it and laid her cheek on her shoulder, her eyes looking back at the white fields, the stable sagging under snow. It had no door and some hay hung from a pale rafter looking warm and strange in that empty place. One day she had run in there to read a letter. She had hidden it first in her blouse and then in hay.

She threw the cushion on the floor and sat down, waiting for the wind, for the lonely sound it made in walls and chimney, imagining she could follow it back past the island, up the hill to the cemetery where the pine trees were weighted with snow, up then, into the sky and on. Then the sound came, clear yet remote, and she felt a veil of air pass her face and heard the berries in the deep bowl crackle on their stems, saw the portieres ripple slightly, swing into the hall and back. She got up and her gown hung rich and full in red folds from the tight bodice. She stood very still, one hand at her throat, looking down the empty road.

He might suddenly appear, plunge into smooth, crusted snow, a black figure shuddering in his coat, a fur cap, black and sleek, drawn to his brows. He might even now be opening the heavy oak door and stepping into the hall, leaving fresh snow behind him as he walked. That instant he could say if he pleased, "Greta, I'm a fool."

It was darker now and over the white slopes, the frozen river, came lights from a more frigid shore; the hotel, little farm houses and stores and then deeper darkness, so dense and soft that all outlines were absorbed, even the wilful fence posts and neglected wagons were gone, and closer, the maze of netting that bound an old chicken yard near the barn was a blur. Everything was gone except light from the deep black, that steady, yellow shine, and all around the snow, the still night, and then the wind again, from far down the river, sharp and vast. She went upstairs and into a room saying, "What is it? What do you want now?" Then she turned on the light and went over to a bed piled with quilts. It was a little boy who answered, "I woke up."

She looked at him sternly and put his arms under the covers. "I told you not to wake up until you saw the light in the windows. You've been in bed only an hour."

"Oh, Mother," he said pressing his head back in the pillow, "why do I have to always be sleeping?"

She tapped her foot. "Sssssh," she said.

"Is Leonard down there?" he whispered. "Is he silly and wobbly again?"

"No," she answered sharply. Then she leaned over him, her cold, white hand on his hair. "Whose boy are you?" she asked.

"Bob Ravel's boy."

"And what's your name?"

"Robin Ravel," he answered shortly.

"And where is Bob Ravel?"

He shook his head. "I don't know," he answered stubbornly. "I don't know."

"Tell me where he is!" she cried and shook his arm.

"I don't want to!"

"Tell me!"

"Mother," he began pettishly, "why do I always have to tell you that?"

"Because," she said, "just because . . ."

"And you know where he is because you told me that time. You did. It was at Uncle Gregory's right near my birthday," he said eagerly, half pulling himself out of bed. "It was too, Mother."

"Yes, I know. But where is Bob Ravel now? Answer me, Robin!"

She shuddered as she said the words. It seemed so cold and strange to be asking her child where his father was, plaguing him when he scarcely remembered the man, and yet she enjoyed his embarrassment and the way he would finally whisper, "He's dead," very shyly and flush. She looked down at him. "Never mind," she said. "You needn't tell me."

"Well, I liked him a lot better than Leonard or Uncle Gregory. Leonard won't ever help me dress and I hope he never comes back here. I never want to see Leonard again."

"But Leonard's your father now."

"Only since Christmas. Why can't we get rid of him the way we did Uncle Gregory? He was my father for a while but we ditched him."

"Divorced him," she corrected.

"And Uncle Gregory was just about as silly and wobbly as Leonard is."

"I know it," she answered and drew her brows together.

"Then why can't we live alone? We'd have lots of fun, Mother, just me and you. Listen, Mother, let's."

"No," she answered and looked down at the red points on her hands, the narrow binding of silver that glimmered at the edge. "You must go to sleep."

"I won't ever like Leonard again after yesterday."

"You'll forget all about that," she said faintly and stood up.

"No I won't. I hate Leonard because he hit me once when I couldn't get my shoe on. And then he hit me because I cried and he told me I was nothing but a baby. I wish we could get away from him, Mother. He's a bad fel-

low. Madie said so down in the kitchen yesterday. She heard."

"I told you not to tell any one about that."

"I didn't tell, Mother."

"Tell me exactly what you said."

"I said that all the noise came when Leonard knocked you on the floor."

"Oh, Robin! What did I tell you!"

She saw him flush. "But she knew all about it and she said Leonard would be in better business if he'd do a little work instead of. . ."

"Never mind, never *mind!*" she cried. "Now, go right to sleep!"

"Mother!" he cried as she turned off the light. "Oh, Mother, please don't get mad with me."

"I'm cross with you," she answered from the head of the stairs and went down, her hands in the thick, warm folds at her sides, her head back so that the coil of hair in her neck touched the silver lace collar that rose like an open fan.

She wondered, in dismay, why she should torture the child, why it had always pleased her to assume a grievance with any man, no matter what his age might be. She felt that coldness come over her as she remembered her ancient delight in quarrels, those rages when she had paced the floor and Bob Ravel had pleaded and finally won her by getting on his knees. But he, too, had been playing, she remembered somberly. And then before Robin was born, those dreadful months when they moved to New York and Cricket Gregory became her best friend.

She went to the window and shaded her eyes but she saw only white stretches that swept down to the river, lights from a black shore, and in the distance a bridge. She heard no sound, saw no marks in the snow, but as she looked closer she saw the stark tree at the gate, and as she watched, saw it rich and dark with leaves, with the moon on it, heavy with yellowed tassels, and sweet, too sweet. She saw the great, warm night, the strange road, and before her the eyes of Bob Ravel, softening as they looked at her, his shoulders

bending, curving, his hands moving closer. She was stiff with disgust at the memory of her swooning, her long sigh that was for the thick, sweet odor, the man's adoration, the anticipation of their flight. She had repeated that word flight to herself during the two days on the train, during the weeks when her mother, that town, the old house, were not even like a dream, when all those things had completely vanished and she was bright and complete and happy, in his arms, his wife, "the only woman he could ever love," she remembered bitterly.

And then in the chasm that followed their union, in that long, monotonous dream when she had watched herself in tears, in rage and resentment, then she had realized that she could never reach her mother again, that they were cut apart, and that her mother was gone, her image empty and dry. Even the little girl who used to skip around the house with garlands of flowers on her arm and smooth stones in her pocket, even she was gone, and then she realized that her world was dim, less intense, deeper, so deep it was hard to reach, so hidden she ached and cried but she could never draw up her words or understand. She remembered how she had sat, dumbly, her hands on her swollen womb, thinking of nothing, appalled at her dullness. Cricket Gregory had appeared. She could see the bright hair, the bitter mouth, the smart suit. But the fine slimness of her had made her turn to the window, her throat hot and sick, waves of pain in her arms and eyes. They had quarrelled politely, under the discreet gay cover of friendship and finally she had said to Cricket sharply, "Thank God I don't need to worry about my husband. He's mine and he's never been any one else's." She heard Cricket's laughter again and saw the bitter, pitying line of her mouth, she felt her hands on those shoulders, and then, again, as the words seemed to fill the air, she felt that dull, deep ache in her stomach.

She went back to the fire and warmed her hands, moved up a chair and sat down. Then suddenly she went to the window and drew the shade, drew all the shades, even the high ones in the dark hall, until she was closed in where no one could see her. She laid more wood on the fire and then,

in weakness, covered her face, but she could feel only loathing for the girl who had wept all that night, waiting in her chair like a fool for her husband to come home. And the shrill accusations, the screams, when he looked dark and his brows drew together.

"Then you believe a fool like Cricket Gregory before your own husband?"

"Yes, I do!"

"You don't trust me? I suppose you think I've lied to you all along."

"Yes, I do! And I saw the whole thing the instant I met Cricket. I knew then that there was something between you. I could feel it. I felt it today when she came into the room. Oh, I tell you, you've done something dreadful to me. . . ."

But he had known how desperate she was to be told that it was all a lie, a monstrous crazy joke, she reflected. It was she who had made him add to the lie, assume the grieved, tortured look of the wrongly accused, the martyr, until in an agony of emotion she had thrown herself at his feet, kissing his knees, begging his pardon and pleading with him to trust her again, to love her as he had at the beginning there under the tree. He had looked like an angel as she gazed up at him from the floor, his face distraught, the eyes soft with pity, his hands in her hair. She could hear him whisper, as he drew her up to him, "Promise to trust me!" and then in sudden anguish. "You *must*."

She remembered the photograph they had taken a few months later, she and Bob and Robin, sitting near the fire in their living room, her face turned toward her husband's smiling, complacent in its mask of trust and adoration, her arms plump and secure. She narrowed her eyes as she remembered the smile she had made for him, the gay talk when he came into the room in the evening, his face masked and set for hers, his eyes with their trick of softness beaming on her kindly as he praised some detail of her gown. And beneath it her fear of discovering them, Bob and Cricket, of finding them in some revolting situation from which she could never escape. And she had found them and she had

buried the image in deep, black water, somewhere inside her, far and distant, silent like death. She felt the curious dizziness come over her, the sharp, intolerable anguish which had no meaning that made her put her hands to her breast for an instant, mutely.

The wind came then, closer, closer, over the snow, around the house, shaking the trees, the bushes, creaking the hinges of shutters and doors, moving away down the river in its big, lonely sound.

And her husband had confessed, he had abased himself before her, swearing that she was the only woman in the world, that Cricket was an incident, a perversity, the downward pull that he could not resist. "I have to go both ways," he had said in anguish. "Up and down. I don't expect you to understand. I have to destroy myself and then save myself. No," he corrected. "You must save me."

Then she had sought a way to wound Cricket Gregory. She had plotted, always watching for a vulnerable place in the woman. They were friends again, their arms twined, and their voices more gentle, more tender than before. "You are so beautiful, Greta." And, "Oh, Cricket, look at yourself." She could hear that tone, feel the quiver of affection that had gone through her, the deep loathing. And then, by chance, she had discovered Cricket's dependence upon her husband, Gregory, her need of him which she tried to hide with flippant words and slights.

She tried to recall Gregory and remembered only the back of his neck, his cane, and the drawn look about his mouth and eyes, as if he were expecting to be wounded. His brisk walk and deep, secure voice had never entirely concealed this acute shrinking. She opened a book and glanced at the page intently, as if to break her mood, but she knew what was coming, she could feel the long, tortured picture of that day rise in her, the moment at the telephone when she heard that Bob Ravel had been killed in a motor accident, her laughter as she went through the rooms announcing to her guests that her husband was dead. She saw their stiff, horrified faces lifted to hers. She saw herself that evening danc-

ing with Gregory, radiant, like a girl, and later sitting on the edge of her bed, a glass of poison in her hand, facing that warm night, that tree all heavy and yellowed in the moon, the dim, poignant face of Bob Ravel.

Perhaps that was some one stumbling up the steps, Leonard, probably, cold and gruff. She hurried to the door and opened it but there was only the unbroken white all around, the arcs and coils of frozen water, and beyond, the lights, the deep black. As the wind came she shut the door, pressing her face on the dark panelled wood, one white hand on the latch, the other high above her. Disgust for that girl on the edge of her bed stung her, then fear and nausea, as the illness seemed to return in its deathly pain.

She walked up and down the hall, her eyes lowered as if other eyes were upon her in the dark, faces that she could recognize, bodies that she would know. Then they were far off again, dim, as irrelevant and grey as a dream; Cricket pleading with her for Gregory, weeping, begging; Gregory the day they were married, his large uncertain gaze on hers, the peculiar smile, as if he, too, were punishing Cricket.

She went up to her room and turned on the light, shivering with cold, tense, as she took down her hair and laid pins in a china tray. Leonard would come back, he would forget about their quarrel, she decided, and slipped on an old red satin robe, richly quilted. She lay down on the couch and lighted a cigarette, one white arm behind her massed hair, and looked about the room, staring into dim corners, gazing coldly at the dark rafters, the full curtains that touched the floor. She thought of the way she had tortured Gregory about his excessive drinking, masking her desire for power under a sweet, hurt voice, staring at him as if he were a stranger when he tried to defend himself. She remembered the set expression he had finally manufactured for her, the assumed alertness, the honest, searching stare.

Leonard might be plunging through the snow now in the clear cold, his cheeks between his shoulders, his hands deep in his pockets. His head would be down and the black cap would make him grotesque there in the night with the white all around, with the river beyond and the little town. He

would be all alone there in the drifts near the tree where she and Bob Ravel had stood, near the porch, then, where all the members of her family had been carried in polished caskets down to the hearse that always stopped under that same tree, all bleak now and bony. But the way she had waited that night for Bob Ravel, how she had wanted to punish him, make him miserable for what he had done to her. And she had wanted to punish Gregory for that same wound, given her through his wife. But the night Gregory saw her with Leonard Farley she had felt joy as she watched the torture fall from his eyes to his mouth and she had known his misery as he gauntly measured himself with the man in that instant there at the corner, much as she had measured herself with Cricket. Then those jaunty steps going off past the cigar store, crossing the street, lagging then a little. But she could never make any of them feel what had been done to her, fresh from this house, these fields, that tree all rich and dark in the moon.

She would never want to go back to the little girl who had stood at that same mirror and looked in, smiling, turning to the side, making angel faces, angel smiles, putting slim white arms over her head, tying ribbons on her hair and imagining in an agony of delight the warm, rich life far off where the wind came from. She closed her eyes to shut out that face, the vague eyes in their large anticipation, even the sound of slippers on the stairs and following, the soft pad of her cat, his tail proud and high, like a feather. Somewhere in her mother's room was a motto she had once made, bending intently over card-board, writing in crayon: "Do Unto Others As You Would Have Others Do Unto You."

But Leonard must come back. She could never make alone the life they had planned, the fine clear outline of themselves free from hate, from jealousy, revenge, safe for all time from the inner branching rot that was growing, taking their lives, leaving them dull and crippled and hideous. He had promised that they would be new, clean, beautiful, and in those first weeks everything had been as he said.

"Greta, we're going to forget our pasts. You needn't ever tell me. I won't tell you. I have been wicked, too, but I was dead. Now I'm alive. God, all the blackness is gone from me. . . ." That strange, intense look in his eyes as he lifted her face to his, the stern, cruel mouth, the arched nose, his eyes glittering now, then her body meeting his as his arms enclosed her, making her new, washed clean. She had turned away from him, too shy to say that she wanted to sing, feeling that it would be insignificant to tell him that a thick, black crust had broken in her and that she was outside, in the light.

But she was always taking her child away into a corner to ask him who his father was and gradually Leonard grew strange, withdrawn, so isolated that she felt she must draw him closer by telling him everything that had ever been in her life, by sweeping herself clean before him, giving him all that she had been. And then, in his long silences, his sudden, acute glances, the events of her life had begun to unwind and that deep, mute anguish had come to the surface. They had been at breakfast and she had been trying to tell him, afraid to open her past to him, and yet half-sure that he would understand, bless her, pity her misfortunes, and then they would go beyond to another even brighter, higher place. And without knowing she had turned to him and called him "Bob." He had thrown back his head and stared at her, his cheeks slowly flushing, his neck growing red and full above his collar, and then he jumped up and threw his napkin on the table.

"Leonard!" she had cried, going toward him.

"Don't come near me!" His lips had drawn tight and yet his eyes were surprised at his rage, as if even now he might laugh gently.

"Please let me tell you. Then we'll be free of it. Don't you want to know everything about me?"

"Don't you suppose I've seen your past a million times in my head. You want to torture me and make a thousand stupid mistakes with my name and keep all those men before me so that I can die a hundred times a day. . . ."

"But I'm free—you freed me, Leonard!"

"That doesn't mean anything."

"But none of them mean anything to me now."

"Yes, that's your fine memory. You'll forget me, too, I'll be the next, won't I. . . ."

"Leonard, Oh, my God, don't!"

But her only thought as his hand struck her mouth was the cook and then Robin had run in as Leonard was standing close to her, his hands clenched, and when he saw the boy his words had come out with anguished wrenching and grinding. "The boy belongs to you . . . the house . . . car . . . money. Everything around here is yours. What do you want from me, that's what I want to know and you tell me. . . ."

As she had fallen, her cold hand on the blow, Robin had screamed in his high, frail voice, "Oooooo, that hurt me!" and she had heard the sound of his feet running down the stairs, and had irrelevantly compared that tapping to the days when her cat had followed her, his tail proud and high like a feather.

So it was Leonard who, promising to burn away her past, had made it more important than the present, he who had given her a fevered loathing for all her actions when before they had stayed in her dumbly, rising sometimes in hate or in a desperate need to return, to live it again just as it had been. She drew her robe closer, glanced down at the frayed sleeve, and felt her blood ripple hot, then cold, as she remembered the day Bob Ravel had taken her to New York and helped her select that robe, this robe, she reflected, and, looked closer, this robe that Gregory had admired too, and other men whom she must not remember, those faces which must not come, those voices. . . . One day she had sat down in the meadow in deep green, her cheeks against the cold grass, her empty, vague head bound with a ribbon and her feet stretched out before her, a little mud on her stocking. Once she had embroidered a turkey on a handkerchief for her mother. One day she had sat at a window, her hands on her swollen womb. That was Leonard's step now, he had opened the door and was coming up stairs, slowly, but not softly so that he might not waken Robin. Why need he be

cruel to Robin? Why did he return at all? Let him stay away and never come back! She looked up into his face.

"Hello, Greta."

"Your feet are snowy," she reminded him.

"I know. Greta. . ." He was on his knees before her, his head lowered. "I understand what you've been through . . . I—I've . . ."

"You can't possibly understand. You don't know what it is to trust a person and wait for him, all out of shape, and then. . ."

"My God, are you back at it again? I'm not referring to your past. I've told you I don't want to know anything about your disgusting intrigues. Damn it, your innocence is beyond endurance. Don't look at me that way!"

Now it seemed to her that she was slipping back so fast that she could never stop herself, that she had no desire to stop, no need except to fall down deep, as far as she could go, into the treacherous river that made her cruel and dull.

"Yes, your past is so important that you think of nothing else. I've watched you from the beginning. Are you happy now that you've made me your victim?"

She saw him throw himself down in the chair and catch hold of his head. As she stood there like a stone, waiting for that deadly flow of words that would pierce him, tear his flesh, she saw a look as distraught as Bob Ravel's come over his face. She had knelt to Bob, she had kissed his knees, begged him to forgive her for misunderstanding him, and now as she watched the softening in Leonard's eyes, the despair, a groan rolled out of her and she shut her eyes, her hand grasping the chair.

"I'm not thinking of my self. It's you, Greta. I'm not jealous. I don't care what men you've loved. I tell you it's not me—it's you. I'm thinking of you. It's all for your good. Are you listening? You don't believe me. I can see you think I'm lying. I swear to you that I'm not jealous." But when she made no response she heard him beat his fists on the table and then his head, crying, "God, God, you can read me. You know. How do you expect me to

forget? I tell you we're rotting from the inside, like vegetables. Haven't I told you it starts inside us, not outside. Yes, play the virgin now. You make a fine one."

That peculiar emptiness came over her, the dizziness, and she said slowly, "Before my past didn't seem to mean anything to me but now I'm all surrounded. I can't ever escape. I don't want to. Even that was better than this."

"Haven't I said you never wanted to? That's the trouble. But what difference does it make to you, me or some one else. And all the time I thought you saw me."

She saw the swollen, flushed look in his face, the mute eyes, as if he were as helpless as she, caught in dark, twisted branches. But she dreaded the softening, the sullen struggle and the generous pardons. And now that high, bright place was gone, as dim to her as the little girl in meadow grass, as faint as the tree below her window that was once dark and rich with the moon, heavy with odor, sweet, too sweet. And running through her and over her was the muddy water, washing away pain and joy, drowning all that had been in its darkness.

She went forward and laid her hand on the man's head, crowding back reproaches, and then as she remembered that once Bob Ravel had stood with his hands in her hair, she went quickly to the window and looked out.

CLINCH CALKINS

I WAS A MAIDEN

I MET a woman in a lonely spot.
What she remembered, what she had forgot
Bewildered me, for always as she told
Would she the same tale differently unfold.

“I was a maiden, I was slim and white.
I lay beside my mother all the night.
High did she loom for she was large and pure
She was quite old and of her strength quite sure.
And while she slept, from the adjoining room
Called low upon my name my own bridegroom.
I trembled but I lay upon my bed.
I would lie chaste until I should lie wed.
That I was chaste my childlessness is proof—
Avaunt, ye murderers beneath my roof
That from my womb my unborn son did tear
Accusers of a virgin, innocent and fair.”

The woman still looked staringly at me
And once again began from memory
“I was a maiden, I was slim and white.
I lay beside my mother. All the night
My bridegroom called from the adjoining room
‘It storms without and in! I hear my doom!
O come and lie with me for surely I
Should know my bride my own before I die!’
I listened to my mother till her breath
Came even, and then silently as death
I let me down from out her high wide bed
And stole into my lover. He was dead.
My hair is white, my heart is wormy green
And still I tell no man what I have seen.

My son is highest among sons of men
And when he dies he will be born again."

The woman leaned against a blackened tree
And rested. When she turned again to me
She saw my eyes upon her sunken chest.
"No, dare not dream upon my early breast.
It was too beautiful for mortal's dreaming.
One dreamed upon it, but his dreams were seeming.
One swooned upon it, but he swooned to death
On my indrawn and my uptaken breath."

"I was a maiden, I was slim and white.
I lay beside my mother. In the night
My lover came as she was gently sleeping
And carried me away, and to my weeping
He added heavy tears, and as we wept
An angel parted us, and we both slept.
They found me living and they found him dead.
We slept together and we were not wed—
O had he given me child, but no, a sword
Was laid between us by the jealous Lord."

"I was a maiden, I was slim and white.
I lay beside my mother all the night
And o the moon between the branches shone
And o my love cried out 'I am alone'
And o my feet were soft upon the floor
And fast I felt them running to the door
And cold I trembled and was hotly shaken
And loud I screamed 'I am to be forsaken!
Hearken my mother! Hearken o moon to me.
Be still you night bird on the flowery tree!
Store ye this ageing night in memory!
My hair turns white, my heart is wormy green
And what I see no man has ever seen.
My lover holds me in his close embrace
And all his members with mine tightly lace

And he has died, and I will bear his son.
I'll name him after love, Corruption!"

Unshriven yet, the woman looked on me
"I have a tale" she said, and mutteringly
Commenced it once again—"and slim and white
I lay beside my mother all the night."

GERTRUDE STEIN

MILDRED'S THOUGHTS

Pigeons cooing only open cards and cases.

And when does grain yellow and the vegetables.

How horribly we crowned the evergreens. We always used to say that we lived in an aquarium. And now how silently the sun shines with a warm wind and cherished water. How livelily we chalk the earth and it opens. How can opening be feeble.

Caroline do not be religious do not be religiously free. Do not love hopes and pearls. I know you don't.

I think, I think, I think that it is a victory a victory of force over intelligence and I I do not agree, I think it is a victory a victory.

Can you hope for the rest.

And now let us tell how it affects me.

Can you tumble out.

I suppose I pose I expose, I repose, I close the door when the sun shines so, I close the door when the wind is so strong and the dust is not there but there is a glare, how tenderly I sun. The fuchsia how can you enclose a fuchsia, the fuchsia has learned this that Caroline loves her sister and will neglect the fuchsia for her sister. I mention this not to displease Henrietta because in all things I obey Henrietta.

How did she weaken Ireland. Give a thought to them, and give them my thoughts. Tell them to remember that every eleven years the sun shines hotly and also bid them remember that a farmer's life is a hard hard life a farmer's life for me.

Establish curls and swelling places. Did you mention me all day. How can I think in between. Henry McBride and Susan's pride. And plenty of chickens in every day. Oh how clean are lots of places.

I have thought very much about heat. When it is really

hot one does not go about in the day-time. It is just as well to drink water and even to buy water if it is necessary. So many people diminish. And flowers oh how can flowers be north. They are in the air. How often do we air everything. Seem to me sing to me seem to me all safe. Seem to me sit for me sit to me all Wednesday. I do not mind July. I do not mind Thursday or Friday or Saturday. I do not mind breath of horses. We know what we think.

Give pleasure girls give pleasure to me and how do we know them in their turn. Because they do not turn away restlessly. We have imagined so much.

Amelia move Amelia move I can be recognised as that.

I can be seen by the light of the moon moonlight. I can be bright by my nephew's light, nephew contrite.

The nephew says, a marquise, a marquise if you please, she can read and write, and a willing, and willing to, willing to alight. Do not delude me by a beautiful word.

Can it be easily seen that country life makes us realise women giants and little negresses and the colour of curtains and almost always worth.

Can a planet please. Mildred is not pleased with the heat of the sun.

Johnny get your gun get your gun get your gun Johnny get your gun get your gun right off.

Johnny get your gun get your gun get your gun Johnny get your gun get your gun right off.

Mildred's thoughts are where. There with pear, with the pears and the stairs Mildred's thoughts are there with the pear with the stairs and the pears. Mildred be satisfied with tomatoes, apples, apricots, plums, and peaches, beets and ever greens, peas and potatoes. Mildred cares for us and Kitty Buss, what a fuss what a happy surprise. We only expected you last night and you have come again. When. It is very hot and no one knows what is the reason.

Can you think. Of me.

I have a sweet place full of air and of space. It is represented for me by idolatry. I idolise in this wise. When I am seated I am easily disturbed. When I am hungry I am easily disturbed. When I love riches I am easily disturbed.

And when I am remembered how I am led I am easily disturbed. I am not easily disturbed. I can see the very smallest of lady-bugs. And how eminently I resemble you.

Can you run quickly, and fly. Do not crush me and do not sigh. I sigh and when I sigh, when do I sigh. I am so religious. Religiously speaking five people sleep in one room. Every room has its gloom. And fire-places. No we prefer heat in summer and cold in winter. No we prefer coolth in summer and warmth in winter.

Let us think Mildred thinks. What do you think. Read me read for me read in me, read my notes. I said in it that I was both good and happy and that you know it.

I count him as negligent. A great many come away.

How have you meant to talk with me.

Now we will credit Mildred with this thought.

Words have often replaced me. Wishes have often replaced me. And courage has often replaced me. I replace blue glasses by white, blue crystals by white, the restoration of Louise Sixteenth. How many Louis make a hundred. How hungry are you in Saint John. Saint John and Saint Louis and Saint Ignatius. How loyally they support Saint Ignatius. Mildred has thought a great deal. She thinks once at a time and without difficulty. She thinks twice. I have called her away. How pleased I am with passages.

And now to introduce a play.

Mildred's Thoughts.

We find ourselves in Mildred's house. We have many ways of expressing our pleasure. We arrange ourselves so that we are never pleading. We plead with each other to be rich. And then we begin to learn. A new name is mentioned. I have already mentioned it. It is Katie Buss. You would imagine that I would reason about this that I would say come together come together and what really makes me feel happy is that I know very well that I have no authority. I reverence her to whom I delegate authority. And indeed I cannot say that the authority is delegated. Indeed no.

How often do we swell. Very well. We will sell very well. And you know what I mean.

I continue to play.

Have you seen a man in there.

Why do you care.

He was looking at me.

Did he know you.

He knew who I was.

Did you know who he was. I didn't then but I did afterwards. When do you expect to meet him. I am not certain that I will meet him at all. Do you think he was pleased with you. My impression was that he was not. Your impression may not be correct. No certainly I may be wrong I often am and what I expect is not what happens.

And if something else happens will you be pleased. It depends upon what that something else is. Lend me a light. Lend me a lighter. Lend me a pleasant curtain. Lend me boys. Lend me oceans of trophies and lend me my hat lend me what you have given me and let me lend you my land. All land is hot in the afternoon.

Can you be careless and cut hair. Can you be careful of grain. Can you wonder about tomatoes and can you believe it of her.

Come and kindly smile.

I remember a play.

A play, can you say, say can you play.

Dinner.

Dinner.

A dinner.

A cold dinner.

And how we can be able to tell them. We told them regularly.

Four doors and a bed. We find some beds very comfortable but when it is as hot as it is just now I find it easier to make a diagram. I will invite well. The first picture is a picture of pears, pears and grapes and a dog and and all that we need when we are happy. How are we happy.

In that case can we preserve quinces.

I have decided that in any case I will love islands. Islands are to the main land what poetry is to plays. I play to you. I play favourably.

In the first play I say, can we pray. Can we pray to her to be kind and good. Can we pray to her to favour us with her company. Can we pray to her to be regarded. In the second play we play that Spaniards may that Spaniards and how easily I prefer french tunes. I can not tell them that that fate is recognised in islands. Please catch a match.

After that play I came together that is we came together reading the rest of it. I can so easily remember misspelling funny. How useful to be another mother.

In spite of a day a day lost in the heat a day lost in the heat of the hall, in spite of the day lost in the heat of all the heat that we know, in spite of words of surprise in spite of mats and strawberries, strawberries in the woods, how prettily I have taught you to say, the woods the poor man's overcoat, and really this year, how many years were victorious. This year the heat has been intense.

I can easily surrender a play, I yield and you yield, and I yield to you.

I continue to be merciless and I am wretchedly hot. You do not really mean that I would mean it if it were possible to express this.

In a play, I repeat in a play we must say that we hesitate to lose a day. And how gladly I would give you activities. Please me in the morning. Yes. And I will please you at night.

Can you confess to me why the Irish and they why they and the pens why the whole republic and records, why records and researches and why most of all why we can relish melons. I find melons with tomatoes. And oil. I find melons with tomatoes and oil. Do be ashamed of it all and let me tell you what to say. Let me tell you what to say about instincts. Instincts relieve me and so do grapes and so do parched plants. Parched plants apart how are you selfish. Parched plants apart connect me with them. Connect with them here in tender ways. I tenderly speak flowingly.

And new glances. Repeat new glances to the moisture. How pleasing is a whole hill and we know how quickly we know how steeply we know best. We know best we say.

A half measure makes a hundred weight. Why do islands

perish. Islands perish in poetry. I repeat. Islands perish in poetry. And now for this much.

Come in.

He said it.

Come in this evening.

She said it.

Come in this evening anyway. He said it. That makes it contemporary. Compatriots and contemporary are not the same words.

I feel the wind on the barometer and the thermometer and the compass. I feel the barometer the thermometer and the compass. When we feel neglected we are ready to be searched. I search you for sins. Sins have spoons and knives and candles. Spoons have silver. And silver is clean. Silver can shine.

Dance and sing.

Dance and sing to him

Dance and sing.

She can dance and I can sing.

I find so few feathers that fall.

Relieve me of all the tenderness and the respect and the repetition and the upshot and the winter. How easily the sun is hot in the winter. How easily the sun is hot in the summer. How easily the sun is hot in the summer and in the winter. How easily the winter and how in the summer, how easily in the winter is the sun hot.

How can you drive me by inches. Inches and measures. Ladies and colours. Not sadly pairs. How can pears be sad.

He does and he does and he does. Does he. She does. How can you read about Susanne. Susanne read to me. I do not know how to read. That does not surprise me. Susanne how tall are you. I do not know but I am very tall, I bend my head to enter. Indeed you do, you are very tall. And every one else is every one else as tall. No indeed I am the tallest here. You are including every one. No indeed I am not including every one. Susanne I find you very difficult to instruct. This does not surprise but indeed I have no need of instruction. Thank you very much.

I like to be paid, I like to save money and I adore searches. I search everywhere for water and salt. But there is a great deal of salt in this country. There is more chalk than salt. A great many people admire me.

I quote from my note.

I have told that I meet the train.

Backers.

I read it he reads it she reads it, she has heard it. I remember very well the story of his wife.

I know that New York is not Boston and I thank god for it. Do not mistake me I do not wish New York to be Boston, I wish Boston to be as it is to continue to be as it is. I do not wish that Boston should change. I don't care if I never hear the word New York mentioned in Boston I feel that I know exactly how I feel. I do feel very well.

A voice mixed with me. Do listen to Barney. He was called Barney before he was born. And weddings how many weddings have been meant to happen. Indeed we eat easily.

And now.

Splendid addresses. When we met together and we very frequently met together a child could imitate us. When we were often mistaken and we were often mistaken we selected them over and over again. Indeed we are not accustomed to contradictions. But that is because we so often agreed. Words agree and hay and vegetables. We often agree about hostages. How can we guarantee anything and worst of all how can we beguile how can we beguile the brother. In every day life we often think of a nephew. It is natural to be anxious. We are anxious. She is not anxious to please. She is not anxious to please me. Please do not be too tired. I will try not to. And you will succeed. I mean to see to that. You will let me. Oh yes. But do you really mean it. Oh yes. Please do not be too tired. I will see to that.

Have come back to my note. Note, boat, goat, float, dote, mote. I wrote you that I was anxious to please. She is not anxious to please me.

Sweet, feet, treat, meat, and bleat.

Complete.

I feel completely how she completes me.

How could you confuse her. Myra or Myra does screen her. She is not Myra to her. She is not breakfast to her. Myra or Myra to confuse her.

We amuse her.

Do you love boys.

How have you been happily willing.

Come, repeat to me just what you have heard.

I can continue to write.

I can continue to write to her.

I can continue to write to him.

I can continue to write, and I can not be defeated. Do not blame at all, do not at all blame them. Do not blame them because of their understanding of their misunderstanding do not blame them because of their misunderstanding me. In so far Mildred says and thinks Mildred thinks and says yes. To do so is a pleasure. Here we repeat a day.

In the morning not at all in the morning. In the morning we are very well.

Very well.

Later in the day we ask may we stay please.

Very well.

We can very easily understand any languages. Any language but that. Any language but that. We can very easily understand any language. And very well pleased. We are easily very well pleased. We understand what we say.

What a beautiful day.

We prefer the train.

Not we.

We prefer rain.

Not we.

We prefer cartridges.

Not we.

We prefer delusions.

Not we.

We prefer allusions.

Not we.

We prefer rough water.

We prefer rain water.

We prefer vegetables.

We prefer flowers.

We prefer lawns.

We prefer it all.

Do not be worried about me.

Do not be worried at all.

Be cautious be Emil.

Be cautious be a meal. Dear me how useful it all is.

And may I go on with Mildred's thoughts.

And I am to continue the honeymoon. A sonatina followed by another is a honeymoon.

A honeymoon is a full moon a quarter moon a new moon a large moon a twin moon and a sleepy moon. A honeymoon is a moon. We are not restless on a honeymoon. We are not nervous on a honeymoon, we are not impatient on a honeymoon. We are reasonable on a honeymoon. A honeymoon is a honey moon.

Go right on calling it Mildred's thoughts. Mildred thinks quite quickly.

And now what do we say.

We begin.

We bow.

We bow to the right and to the left.

We advance and we look at the noon. At noon the guests leave and so does Peter the waiter. After that we feel neglected. Then we sing together.

Sing to me sing to me sing to me I see. I see you sing to me. I see I see I see. I see that you sing to me. Sing to me together. We sing to you together. We sing to you together. We sing to you I sing to you we sing to you together. And Myra was not a disappointment.

Leave me the peaches, the pears and the currants. It is really astonishing how many fruits have double meanings. I have often been astonished by it. Mildred thinks to me. Mildred's thoughts. How pleasant. And now let us think singly. You know very well how I feel about that.

Maps many maps are maps on weddings. Weddings are so cheery. And they have made ways of being Mrs. Beffa.

Lost. What was lost. I lost the name of the gate which

opens except that it is never shut. One speaks of it as a gate and is a gate a gate. I feel that necessarily we must change our light. They felt so also. They felt about it exactly in the same way that we did. We had a most efficient honey-moon. Mildred Mildred say to me we both belong to the land of the free.

And now we have a correspondence with Mr. Willetts.

We find that he answered too promptly that he tells us exactly what we wanted to know that he means to annoy us, that he has a pleasant way of having a superior. A thousand people write letters.

How do you do I have been meaning to swim.

How do you do a great many people ask for a thousand pounds.

How do you do Katie Buss has not answered for the autobus.

We are eighty miles away from an autobus.

And now houses are not made of wood.

Will you come and spend days with me.

Will you come and spend the days with me.

How often do I read hand writing.

Come again.

It was a very exciting story.

Katie Buss, Frank, Louise, and Ernestine went together to serve the queen.

Spain still has a queen.

Katie Buss, Frank, Louise and Ernestine went together and religiously ask for a brother. Brothers and fathers. How can women be religious with candles.

Candles are expensive in some countries.

Katie Buss, Frank Louise and Ernestine meant to escape consequences. They had pleasure in their own astonishment, they knew that republics breed republics they were equally certain of this about kingdoms. How would it be if a statement were made about that being sufficient.

Can we suffer by necessity.

Katie Buss, Frank Louise, and Ernestine were famous for their love of mosses. Mosses really only exist in a moist climate.

And Mildred wishes for rain.

I have frequently told the story of Mildred and the three stories.

Mildred is not easily pleased with Susan. Henrietta is not easily pleased with Caroline. Nelly is not easily pleased with Henry. And Kate Buss is not easily pleased with Dorothy. Jane is easily pleased. Yvonne is not very easily pleased. Marjory is not easily displeased. And William is an excellent citizen. How can you be uproarious. We have earnestly prayed for Kate Buss, Frank, Louise and Ernestine and they have as readily rented as their farm. I too will tell all about it.

Mildred says that water, wells and washing are secondary only to letters. She writes letters. And so do we. Many thousands write letters.

Domestic scenes. Different in domesticity.

I find a domestic scene created by two and without pets. They can be found in various situations. For instance. If one is leaning out of a window and another is seeing that one and expecting that one to descend the stairs it constitutes a domestic scene. Again if unexpectedly one is awakened and another has been like wise awakened and there is then no doubt that morning has come, this also constitutes a domestic scene. If asking reasonably that one discharges one's duty with consideration for the eagerness for change on the part of the other this too constitutes a domestic scene. And most reasonable of all, when one serves the other and the other serves the one and both remove the coverings that conceal titles then indeed we may speak of it as of the genuine character of a domestic scene.

How easily are we entitled to more.

Come again.

I do know that I am recognised. I do know that rain and dust and sun and travelling and gratitude expressed in letters leads me to remain sleepy. And then what.

I come to cherish me and heat water. Cherish me and let us dream. We dream of the martyr. How can a season pass. How can pink indicate martyrdom. How can feelings resolve themselves. He has resolved to love me the day after to-morrow.

I think the silver ones are prettier than the gold ones, thank you so much for giving them to me. You have been I have been you have been seen. You have been you are being you are my queen.

I think the silver ones are far prettier than the gold ones. Thank you so very much for giving them to me.

And a domestic scene. I mention my name. I mention that my name is Herbert and that I feel very well. And then I am very pleased with everything and naturally I am cheerful and gay.

How can pearls please. Pearls please me because they are accompanied by a drawing I draw merrily and I win, I win. I win I win. Pearls please me and I draw carefully and I do win. And I do wish to be that fairy. How many fairies are fair to me. One fairy is fair to me. One very fairy is fair to me.

How easily I raise glasses. Am I apt too. Am I apt to raise glasses. And everything makes me happy. We are so ready.

Do earrings, do earrings tell sex. Do earrings feel very well. Do earrings alarm. Do earrings tease. Do earrings please. Do be especially grateful to the little man who rings the bell.

Connect one with him.

Now I sing.

Sing a song of utterance. I mutter to you. Sing a song of expression. I express the meaning. Sing a song of reading. I read of the adventures of Mrs. Whitney.

Sing a song of pleasure. I please her.

And now mix up Frank with meat.

I do not care to eat so much and now I say. Baby is all well baby is all well baby is all well baby is all well.

Very well.

How much is money. Money is very funny.

In play.

Baby I am happily married Baby. To whom am I happily married.

Baby I am happily married to my husband. Baby. And to whom is my husband married. Baby. My hus-

band is married to me. Baby. And to whom is my husband happily married. Baby. My husband is happily married to me.

Baby. When was I married.

Baby. I was married like a queen before I was seen.

Baby. And how was I seen.

Baby. As a baby queen. Baby. And so I was married as a baby it would seem.

Baby. Yes I was married as a baby queen.

Baby. You mean as a happy queen.

Baby. Yes I was married before I was seen.

I understand you very well.

How long is our street. Long enough to be paved in Italian. And how small is the man. As small as the pump. And can he use it. He can use it all day. And can he be a man although he does not look as if he could say anything. Yes indeed. He never tires.

Now we make mischief.

Frank, Hyman, William and Genevieve. How often they call them by their name. And Constance pleads.

Please plead.

Now be in earnest.

Baby is all well baby is all well baby is all well I say. Baby is all well baby is all well baby is all well all day, and all night too.

Baby how can you speak of wishes.

Kitty Buss is silent when she wakes. Thank you Kitty Buss.

Baby how can you manage to stare. I stare at the chair and I say baby is all well all day, and all night too.

How can you drink water. How can you drink water too.

I am very sleepy when I say how do you do Mrs. Addis.

Call me a buss sir. There is a buss. How often were words misspelled mispronounced and misquoted.

I have a feeling that earls, that there are no more earls.

How can you be so happy.

She is a dear.

She is here.

Read me to sleep *Arthuro*, *Arthur* in Spanish. The major likes chintz. Do eyeglasses go with earrings. All this and more was mentioned just before they sailed.

Sailing.

How many have ingenuity in making a plot. How many have ingenuity for mathematics. How many have ingenuity enough to find new prints for old. Old prints are valuable. New prints are valuable too. And cone chickens are lovelier than bread birds. Birds and bread may marry, chickens and birds and ducks too. How we do like cooler weather. Have a farm. Do have a farm with me. As for me I prefer a garden. This is true in English. We talk English determinedly. We speak English loudly. We control English serenely. Did you say secretly. I did not.

Do you believe in Gaul. All Gaul is divided into many parts. Each one is a department. Beffa is going away to another. And the Caesars. God bless the Caesars.

And now for the reasons.

The reason we have for succeeding is that an eraser made from finely spun glass an eraser made of rubber and an eraser made of other things all have their usefulness. And Mrs. Whitney. I cannot despise Mrs. Whitney.

I am so glad that Louise's cold is no worse.

And now for detail. The first detail we find it necessary to mention is a tailor. The second a shirt maker, the third a dressmaker, a fourth a retailer and the fifth a milliner. Hats we don't quite know why hats have such a strange name. Startle me.

And a door.

A door finds itself an outlet.

And the windows. We have been alarmed by windows.

And the noise of the street.

And the noises of the street.

How easily he changes from one workman to the other from one electric current to another. I am afraid that his diagnosis is incorrect. I am inclined to believe that I have been right.

Did I hear everything correctly. We sweetly sleep. This never tempts me to say, hush until to-morrow morning.

Good-night and remember the cow. You know we promised to speak of farming.

Can you be afraid of crackers.

I am now going to tell a long story of the speculations concerning Cabot Lord. He is named that because he was born in England and came to America in infancy. He was named that because he was the son of a converted Presbyterian, converted from atheism to presbyterianism. He was named that because he was converted from Presbyterianism to Catholicism. He was named that because he was willing to save men and women and went to very many an early wedding. He was named that because he fought for freedom for saving everything from predestination. He was willing to be engaged for needing the soldier and civilian. He was a gentleman when he was selecting, he was reluctant when he was bewildering and he was admired by those who selected him to admire him because of his wisdom. How can a jew be an atheist or a farmer a civilian. Do please speak to me as well as bow.

These are a collection of purchased roses. I use my cases in case of need.

This is my collection.

Now and again.

How soon do we steal away E. A. We do not steal any one away. She can stay. He can stay. Do they stay any way. Please call them to the steamer. The steamer and calling. E. A. can pack everything away.

I guess that he is illustrious.

I feel very much the need of universal rows. Rows and rows of windows and they change, the exchange, what is the difference between the cotton exchange and money in exchange. My cousins visited me. And I did not find them cautious. How old have I been this year.

And now the annual. How can the annual being two be the dial. And how can the desert being two be the broom. Broom grows in Spain. Therefor it is called Spanish broom.

And now think.

Think all together.

How can we think such thoughts.

Another description of summer. Summer is very hot and this summer, it has been exceptionally hot. And I have enjoyed meeting Merry thoughts. How can you be determined to arise. He arises and I arose.

Thank you for the meaning of reading. Read aloud. How can training make two cities have the same name. It is extraordinary how often this happens.

Another lad.

Are you using the ladder.

He had forgotten the mildew but we haven't. We remember Waterloo and Louise Haynes and repetitions and Emil and extra riches. We remember our word. We give our word. And have we been faithful to our friends. Have we been loyal to our enthusiasm and have we been nervous specialists. I mean to please Demuth and his father. You can not please his father. His father knows Arnold very well. I hate you Kate he does not hate Kate. She hates we hate they can hate us. We hate you hate now hate Kitty Buss. We hate they hate they shall hate plus, plus winning a town. A village a town a tree all of it looks better with water. A swimming school has plenty of exuberance. And what do you think of balls. Hush dont mention. The nineteen year old Beatty wife did. Call me a brother. You are not that brother.

Caesars I trust you, to be true and to have come through a cow for my jew. Caesars I trust you to have come through, for you are true a cow for my jew, Caesars I trust you to have come through a cow from my jew because you are so true. Caesars you are so true that I trust you to have come through a cow for my jew.

How can you be pale at Christmas how can you be tall so soon, how can you be splendid and gracious and call Follette at noon. And are they going away. My wife says no not to-day. How can they be young and strengthened and earnest and splendid too. That is what I think of them. And they think that they are staying longer.

Chick chick chick chick chick. Chicken made of glass. How happily I pass the rolling fields of brass with the balls that say not so.

We have won.

What.

The war.

And how many can say so.

How many can say so.

Belle and Babcock both begin with B. B is beautiful for a foundation. How can you be surprised. I was surprised to find that he was mentioned.

Katie Buss is tall and fair. Fair to me. Katie Buss is tall and fair to me. You mean to use fair in the sense of just. Yes indeed. Chicken made of glass. Alas.

Chicken made of glass. Alas.

I am very pleased with the chicken. Thank you so much my dear wife for having presented it to me and for having been so careful in bringing it back.

Chicken made of glass.

Plots.

Come and dream of stealing a table from Harriet.

Stories.

Come and be generous. Let me tell the story of Henrietta, Henrietta did not think that she had been well treated. She cried hysterically in the garden.

Thoughts.

I think very well of my mother.

Mildred's thoughts. How well we finish the water.

While she was talking she found what she was needing. Jennie did that.

She went upstairs quickly. She went upstairs very quickly. And how could she laugh. She laughed this afternoon. The chicken made of glass is comparable to an ass made of wood and a fig made of bread is comparable to a cow made of pudding. Do you see me. Yes I see.

A plot.

The janitor the janitor has not left. He and his wife linger. The janitor has come. He and his wife have installed themselves.

The visitors have enjoyed themselves. Do not laugh too heartily. Nor sing too merrily.

I can call Eugene Eugene. And can you call many men.

I can call many men. Eugene and Norman and Morgan and Henry and Elizabeth and Genevieve and Constance and Ermentrude. I can also call on all of you to get fatter. And in climbing who leads the way. A hillock leads the way. Hay there has been an extraordinarily large yield of wheat here this year. Vegetables are not abundant, fruit is good but not plentiful.

Read this for me. The first novel. I wonder how they happened to think that I knew them when they came again. They came again and said, do you remember me. And I said very well. They said very well then may I bring a friend. And I said certainly. And then I explained. I said Norman remember that I dont need your wife. I have friends of my own. I am not married to my husband. He has no one but me and the money is mine. My father's name was Jephthah and there were four of us. Four children and we have all married. That is to say the women have had husbands and the men wives. And yet are we married. Can you reason with me. I cannot repeat what I hear. We are all very wealthy and we are all fond of our money and keep control of it absolutely. We sign our checks with our maiden names because we are not married. And now I listen to then and I do not feel angry at all except when there is a question of belonging to a secret organisation. It is natural that in union there is strength. Have you seen this embroidered. I remember you wished to buy it and it was for sale.

Mildred's thoughts. I think strongly. And riches how often are there different ways of re-editing worlds. Do you think that I would wish it if Frank I call him H. Frank.

Mildred's regard. How have you spelled your name.

And handkerchiefs are neat on heads in hands and around necks. Handkerchiefs are neat and feet, feet are splendidly ambidexterous. And now I have repeated what I have said that a great many expressions are such that they cannot be sudden. We have lost our servant but she was no paragon. A daughter of the armistice is not necessarily young and beautiful. She is not necessarily happy and rich. She is not necessarily faithful and strong. She is not necessarily

winnowed. If there has been a good crop and there has been a good crop if there has been a good crop, of wheat not vegetables if there has been a good crop what can sisters say to one another.

Mildred I think. Mildred I do think that you have been rich that is to say wealthy.

She never thinks about them.

Mildred never thinks about Marsden Hartley or Marcel Duchamp or Martin Dehmuth. Mildred never thinks about Marsden Hartley or Marcel Duchamp or Martin Demuth presently.

Presently we manage to influence her, we say come come come to Myra's husband. Myra with an I Mira.

Come come Mira's comes, come come.

We were splendid about extravagance. We said Mildred how can Ferdinand deceive you.

We were splendid about the Literary Digest. We said I get all the foolish novels for Alice. We were splendid about friendship. We said listen to me and prepare yourself for San Tropez or Frejus or Italy or Mallorca. We said how can you imagine I wonder. I wonder if you can imagine what I mean.

Mildred thinks of them. She thinks of George, Marsden, Marcel, Martin and Lee Master. She thinks of busy ways and mistakes. She thinks of relief. It is a relief to her to stand still. And this does sound like one another. High in her hands she held the chasuble of her life and she measured by a measure. How sweetly, flowers, how sweetly flowers need water.

And now to be able to tell a story.

Marsden Hartley knows what he worships he worships a dome. Marcel Duchamp knows what he worships. He worships that thought. Martin Dehmuth knows what he worships. He worships the end. And Mr van Aymand van Burgh worships letters. How pleasingly we all see George.

George was in love with a blond. He sang a song I love a brunette. George was in love with fables and he said Josie Josie I am not in love with thee. George was in love with Frejus and he said things are as they were. George was

not neglected by wireless. He said I have no fear of winter in summer nor in winter. And in this way no one knew that anything had happened.

He held his life in his hands and he wished to be reasonable. He was very reasonable and he said Josephine you are not my queen we have the same origin, we love the south in winter and the North in the North they speak of Spaniards as poor Spaniards. They love only Poles and Armenians. And even this many change.

Have you been in earnest about me. Have you understood leaves. Leaves of salad. Hundreds of salads.

Have you been in earnest about me. Have you understood the means by which I have planted. Have you understood my needs and have you wept. Have you swept the paths since Barney left and have you put out the fires the little fires. Have you been in earnest about me and now to change.

You repeat I repeat they repeat this. We repeat they repeat that we will miss. They repeat you repeat that I do please. They repeat you repeat that they will please me. They repeat you repeat that they will please me too.

How can you thunder past.

They said that there was a strain. They said that was a strain in attempting to cajole me. And labourers. How can labourers be rich and sell something. How can we be disappointed with the price. Pray for me for tea. How can you refuse to accuse me. How can you accuse me of wishing to avoid expense. How can you avoid excusing me when I say that I was prepared to stay. But did they ask what is the best reason, did they ask me to tell it to them all again. Did they tell me that Nellie, did they tell me that Nellie was winsome. Oh Mildred dear we certainly are here.

How can the words mean Joseph. And how can Joseph be the patron saint of what. Do convents teach that. Oh dear me no. Do convents teach that.

How can Joseph be that. How can he be the patron saint of husbands who have been deceived. Can convents teach that or do we learn this thing in time. Time and time again. And she sleeps very quietly, and words are said that serve

as bread. That is to say they are indigestible. Bread is the staff of life and so are words.

I cannot neglect women. A woman is best when spoken to as if there was no reproach. She does not reproach me nor I she. We do not mount in the same silence. A mountain of joy. What is the difference between H.S.O.S. and H.L.O.L.

I cannot see the necessity of having authority in the kitchen or in the room. Pray for me.

A Prayer.

May we see the room. We have heard that it is extremely beautiful, that the objects in it are of great interest and that every one has a feeling of restfulness when seated there. We also understood that it is there that you compose the charming books which we so much admire. May we come and see the room. May we.

Clandestine correspondence.

How do you do.

I forgive you everything.

And there is nothing to forgive.

An Interchange of Obligations.

If I supply you with salad will you supply me with cheese.

If I supply you with apples will you supply me with fish.

The result of a separation.

She writes letters to me about the boys. He tells me about the boys. They tell me about the boys. She says that the boys need America. He says that the boys need France. They say that the boys need sweetness. And the boys are prepared to swim.

And Barney.

A song of Barney.

Barney looks like Julia. Barney is not small. Barney hopes to be an Irishman and to play cricket when he grows tall. Barney is like the boy on the stage. Barney is as sweet as he can be. Barney is a favourite with Mildred, Miss French, Alice and me. Barney is the son of Joseph Hone.

Mildred's thoughts when Susan has deserted her and when Alfred has sent her his book.

I resent it particularly as it is a thing to which I am

completely unaccustomed. I did not enjoy it inordinately because he has forgotten the spiritual side. I have been able to understand his mathematics but many people will be unable to interest themselves in it.

She was glad the dance was over.

How much is told. I can see the subject of a diary.

Yesterday I was nervous.

To-day I am feeling better.

To-morrow I am going to be successful. And Thursday I am selfish.

How can you please Mrs.

You say yes ma'm in America.

In England, you say yes.

In Italy you say I am very pleased that you are of that nationality and in Brazil you cross the street slowly.

Give a thought to Cuba.

How pleasantly I dwell upon that.

Mildred thinks that chicken made of glass a horseshoe made of glass, a king's messenger made of glass, she feels that we have taught the workingman to feel what he feels. And I, I please myself. I teach myself to feel what I feel. I beg your pardon. I did not mean. I meant that I am taught to feel what I feel and I feel what I feel when I am taught to feel what I feel. I feel for them. They feel for me. Frank feels very well. And Katherine Buss. She certainly has reasons for saying that she and New England, that Mildred and New England that they and New England she has reason in saying she has reasons for saying that they and New England love France.

Mildred thinks that the world has accepted its manhood its womanhood and its age and its childhood. She thinks that she herself so feels no effort is necessary. Please buy a clock. Mildred is still thinking.

Please buy a clock. Please buy a clock. Please buy a clock. Please buy a clock. Money is back. Get your money back.

Money is back. Get your money back. Please buy a clock for me.

BABETTE DEUTSCH

FOUR POEMS

DISCOVERY

Beauty was a thing that I had put away
With other childish things, as, bevelled stones,
And shells like bladed petals, and the gay
Light that on waking drenches drowsy bones.
Such matters, with death-colored cloths carefully gloved,
Stood in the mind's dark eaves; they would look strange
Next the more costly stuff brought in and shoved
Into place by those two huskies: time and change.

But today, when I was moving clumsy pieces
To come at—what was it, now, the second-best bed?—
I stumbled on beauty. It had no stains, no creases,
And not one moth had opened its mouth for that bread.
The heavy thing I need may be standing behind it;
I hardly care, though, if I ever find it.

MOVING

AFTER the fretful hours were done,—
Morning, noon, and afternoon,
After dusk had come, too soon,
And the sun,
A flushed and speechless creditor,
Upon our lack
Had turned a hasty back,
I turned my own
Upon small swarming trifles and edged fears,
To face their residue from other years.

Going from an old house to a new
Gives one curious things to do,—
Closets to empty,

Heartaches to throw away,
Threadbare joy
To divest of mothballs,
Papers to destroy:
Letters from golden lads and girls who say
They have come home from the university
With nothing learned but what they were not taught,
Or, they are in love again,
Or, they are sad
Because of too little love and too much thought,
Or, asking what was meant on such a day
When a certain person said
The sort of thing people will say . . .
It doesn't matter.
Some of them are dead,
And some are married, and a few
Are famous.
Going from an old house to a new
Gives one tiring things to do.

And when we leave that new house, as we must
After some yet unlived years, maybe
I shall look back
To this night, and shall call myself a fool
For having cried in my heart for the old school
And the university
And the lovers and friends
Lost in the dark forest of the world.
Ends
Come harder as we grow older,
And ambitions shrink
With time and weather. Did I sigh?
The nights grow colder.
Or do I?

OF BANQUETS

Above us the moony ceiling seems to sway
with the slowly revolving night;
and all the wrinkled futilities of the day

are bundled odorlessly out of sight.
Now even the dry scrapings of thought being cast
into a dark bin, we are free again
to set forth our savage bounty, and at last
taste that harsh fruit, to touch whose skin is pain.
Two courses has our banquet: we shall feed
first on our own hearts, mouthfuls of bitterness;
then, while it is yet raw, and yet can bleed,
we shall take as much of truth as we can press
upon resentful palates. Never shrink,—
for when such feasting is forever over,
we'll have cold draughts of emptiness to drink,
and we'll be friends, who have been lover and lover.

WEST WIND

This is no wind,
but a surf that marches its breakers
over the cliffs,
over the forests,
pushing
over the hills,
lashing the foamy branches,
till the furious roads
whirl
as with waters.
This is no wind,
this is no crash of ocean,
this is the clenched roar of a tiger
tearing
the throat of the leopard day,
till dark spot and tawny
raggedly flap over the tiger's mouthings.
This is no wind, no sea, no jungle creature,
this is a sightless miraculous thunder rushing
to beach upon,
and shatter
the coasts of disillusion.

LOUISE BOGAN

KERAMIK

For the first time that summer the gentleman at the table next the lattice was dining alone. His face was tanned like good moroccan leather. The bridge of his curved, fleshless nose was peeled from the sun. The shaven hair at his ears and at the back of the bald skull matched his fine gray flannel shirt almost perfectly. His cuff links were moonstones set in silver. He wore two rings, a cat's eye set in platinum, and a platinum band striped with diamonds, on the little finger of his left hand.

The brown, nervous old hands spread the paper money fanwise on the cloth. One waiter from a group that lounged in a corner, their heads together as though they were conspirators in a matter of great import, slid toward him, astonishingly alert suddenly. "Arrangez," the gentleman said to him, and rose stiffly from his chair.

It was getting dark earlier and the splayed leaves of the chestnuts were fallow and dried, immediately above the lights.

In the courtyard near the kitchen waiters passed and repassed, bearing silver dishes on napkins, the whole length of their forearms. They carried them with a strange swinging motion, as though in this way only not one drop of the precious gravy would be spilled, not one leaf of the salad disturbed. The little *chambres séparées* were filling up gaily. Above the absurd steep roof hung the fresh and ordered stars.

It was nearly autumn. There could be no doubt of it any longer. The vase in the motor was stuffed with stringy asters. Then, what seemed to be whole heaps of leaves rushed under the wheels. Of course, they never swept the streets any more. Girls and young men walked by, holding each other close, in the chilly evening. The barrow of the fruit woman at the corner of Bellaria Street was full of

apples. Cherries and plums were over. The gentleman, balancing his chin upon hands clasped over a stick, on the gray cushions of the perfect motor, had reason to feel cold.

The big stone hallway smelled of damp plaster and soap. It was unreasonable to expect Anna to have lighted a fire, he thought, sliding his hand along the thin iron rail of the curving stairway. No one built fires in these frugal times because of one dismal September day.

It was half-past eight. An hour ago Else had still been waiting for him. He thought of her sitting sideways at her dressing table, glancing furtively at her small powdered face in the mirror, becoming restless and unhappy. Her lapis beads grazed that lovely hollow of her collar-bone, that always shone freshly, pearlily, like a groove of a shell.

By now she had become angry, had ordered a cab, and was lifting hors d'oeuvres delicately between her fork and spoon from their platter to her plate, in that other garden that amused her, where so many English came, and there was music.

But it pleased him most to imagine her waiting for him, she and her shadow in the mirror, half mournfully looking down at her low-heeled slipper and thick silk stockings, and drawing her long gloves through her hands.

The gentleman inserted the heavy key into the lock of a door on the third landing. He held himself stiffly erect from his hips. His body, under the gray coat, was solid and alive. But the legs were thin: they seemed to dangle from the hips. They were spare old legs that would ache in the approaching autumn.

All the veiled lights in the silken room flashed on as ever. Thank heaven for that! The sconces on either side the couch, the lovely dyed shade on the table beneath the portrait, the tiny lamp in the alcove beside the bed: all alive and the same. Here, too, it was quite warm. He drew off his gloves with a relieved puff of breath.

The bright figurines in their shelved glass case blinked with glazed reflections. The gray and mauve girl gathered her curiously designed hair away from her neck and breast. Her raised arms and leaning body were beautifully unrelated

arcs. The peasant in the red cap, on hands and knees looked into the eyes of a doe that stood trembling before him. The gentleman's stick struck lightly against the glass box, and all the figures rattled faintly.

Anna had laid out dressing gown and lounging suit across the embroidered linen coverlet of the narrow bed. The dressing table, shaded by a screen from the lamp, still twinkled here and there from the diminished light at the window. Some woman had shuddered at all those tortoise-shell boxes and distorted scent-bottles, set in their silver brocade tray. She had said that it was like the horrible table in a theater, where an old woman watches girls powder their faces and necks, and gropes with hatred after the coins they leave in her basket.

The woman in the portrait above the gleaming table and its lamp stared at him, while he rubbed eau-de-cologne under his bony hawk's nose and brushed his cropped gray hair. She sat in an oak chair, and watched him. She and the play-bill that bore her name and hung, framed in narrow black on the wall opposite, were whole, in the half-darkness. He felt refreshed and warmer. Surely a gentler breeze had come up. The chill might die out before morning. He undid the window and opened it outward. The trees below were parted and closed again by that gentle wind. There they were, the virtuous dead woman he had never met, and himself, in the gray silk rooms. And there was that girl, out beyond in a garden where there was music. She was finishing her coffee now, and listened to the violins with shining lashes closed over deep eyes.

They were no longer his affair, women, dead or alive. The woman hidden in the dark oils of her portrait had loved the man who had once lived in these rooms. An actress, very gentle, very sensitive. She had killed herself because of the breaks and pauses in the midst of love, the faltering between kiss and kiss. Unfortunate: driven and destroyed by nothing. Caught and crushed between words, kisses, farewells: handful of air, nothings.

The cherry brandy made a bright funnel-shaped spot in the solid liqueur glass. Here was reality! The panatela,

that too, and the cat's eye set in platinum, evil and mud-green, on the brown knotted finger. He put the tray with the square bottle, the cigar-box, and the one glass, on the table before the couch. The room quivered and shone. The smoke from his cigar rose in reflection in the mirror between the windows.

He had taught them all something and had learned nothing in return. There was always more to teach. They were all so much at sea, so stupid or so given to dreams. With each new lover their lives stopped or began. With him they were greedy, or chattering, or vain,—freer than a younger man could make them. They all had been so brief that they were perfectly, sharply outlined. They never thought themselves insecure, although to-morrow they were gone. All brief, save that one wise, quiet girl.

The thin, big-eyed Russian,—he had taught her to sit immobile, to move her eyes only, to play with trifles in her sharp fingers, to smile. When she moved her head the loose skin on her neck wrinkled too easily. The woman from Bucharest, long-waisted, firm-bosomed, had eaten too briskly. He had cured her of that. The hard-legged young French blonde had talked too much, opening her mouth widely over her crowded teeth. They had all learned something before he sent them away.

The willow leaves fell down upon the tables in the garden. Had she taken her heavy wrap, or did she sit there shivering, while some young man, an acquaintance newly discovered, perhaps, or a stranger, delighted with those cool eyes, held a match shielded in his hand for her long cigarette?

She had not needed to come to him for knowledge. She had always been wise. She corrected his praise, sometimes, but took all that was due her with simplicity. His taste, so unfailing in all matters of fitness and beauty, included her. Therefore she held herself confidently with him and was at ease.

She leaned against the gently curved cover of the inlaid chest. Her ivory shawl swept the reddish wood that was the color of a violin. Flowers, fruit, urns, and naked chil-

dren were abruptly hidden by the ivory skirt that swept down to the thin, pure feet and ankles. Her hair was as pale as wheat over the square forehead, warmer with yellow in the heavy coil at her neck. Her amber beads, strung on red silk, hung down along her slight bosom and waist and thighs,—bright, weightless, almost to her knees.

The cigarette in her fingers went to ash. Not once did she raise it to her lips. She was inlaid against the blue window, intagliated into the dusk. Weeks would pass: the last leaves would skip over the paved courtyard, and snow would go by in white currents. She sat there leaning forward, bending forward from the curved wood, her body secure and desireless, her cigarette in spark and ashes.

Chords struck at random in some room out beyond beat against his hollow old heart. The brandy seemed to lie there, still holding its red funnel shape, in the block of his breast as in the liqueur glass.

She leaned forward, curved like a plume. His ears at once heard and said the music.

In her street the lights of a café are very bright under their grotesque shades. A piano spins out a fast wiry song. She fumbles in her bag for the portieress' money. But the young man has it already in his hand. He pushes the bell. The portieress wakens slightly, sleeps again. At the third ring she moves herself gently from her husband and leans down for her shoes.

"I must see you again soon."

"I am busy. You would have to telephone."

"We could go to the country some afternoon before it gets too cold. To that restaurant near the little artificial lake, some afternoon for tea, before the end of the month."

"You could telephone."

"You will forgive me if I tell you that I think you are beautiful?"

"Yes, yes."

"To have seen you again to-night! Let me telephone tomorrow."

"You are impatient."

"We have the same interests. We could do so many things together."

He kisses her hand, fervently, on the seams of the white glove. Her face and hair are one silver pallor in the shadow. Something not her heart is beating,—something like pity, like revenge, in the middle of her body. Her thoughts give quick runs and mimic theatrical gestures while she listens and knows how cold she is.

"I had an old lover. That is over now. 'I kiss your heart!' he said once to me." This disturbing acrobatic notion whirls in cartwheels around her brain.

The song goes on and on, behind the chestnut leaves' lax fingers. The nuts in burred case lie also on the stems. In spring the towering flowers had hung like little sponges in the rain.

The old body, tanned to the waist, and patched with gray-ing hair, faces the woman lost in dark oils. The Schubert song links itself to the fans, combs, crests of the piano notes. Over and over: increasing forgetting, begun. The powders and salves on the dressing case are closed in upon their own perfume. Who will use them again? Some woman brought in from the street in winter, whose southern skin is cracking from the cold.

One figurine, blended out of the light, holds flowers in a spatulate hand against his glazed breast. One sits upright, arms crossed on chest, like a gunner on a caisson.

Voice and piano climb through the broken measure. The voice cries out full and whole, hung on a strong breath.

He hears that voice. The lamplight burns on the sheets. He hears it and gives it back and praises it and lets it fall into the well of his old heart, cooler than women's wisdom, or passion, or chastity.

JEAN STARR UNTERMEYER

REPLY FROM THE CITADEL

NEVER will a wordy noose
My love snare, his mind confuse.

Nor the neatest flatteries
Win him from his verities.

Call him Roman that you seek,
Slim Castilian, Teuton, Greek,

Yourself your very phrases mock—
He was ripped from Sinai's rock.

Of the Chosen, he is free
For responsibility.

Called to honor, picked by fate,
Unified, inviolate.

Though he stray within a dream,
Judge no man by what he seem.

At the last he will be first,
Unreproached and unaccursed.

And no pagan theory
Injures his fidelity.

Though he toss upon your breast,
In my thought he finds his rest.

Though you make his passions start,
I give him the better part.

All his noblest strivings live
By the succor I can give.

Wait, strange woman, you will see
He has never gone from me.

Ours a race whose laws on stone
Burn into our flesh and bone,

Purify and prod and prove
Faithful both to God and love.

JOSEPHINE STRONGIN

THREE POEMS

1.

Child—in all the flying sky,
that is your friend
because some flying oneness in yourself
rides rushing high,
do you see the waning bird,
that is your friend
because some straining bird-heart in your being
beats and sails and pains
and slashes height—and wanes?
Child—down all the grown, old mountains,
that are your friends
because some found, whole knowledge in you,
glides immovably beneath the moving sky,
do you find the settled, seeking trees,
that are your friends
because some feathery, rooted thing in you,
sways and breaks and dies,
and lives along your mountains,
and stands black against your skies?

In all the hourful ocean,
that is your friend
because some half monotonous appeal in you,
lifts and sinks,—lifts and sinks,
and sways and foams and breaks,
do you find the rain and sun and wind and moon,
that are your friends
because some hidden simple whole of you,
rends and shocks and moves and shines,
in vast whole cosmic wide undifferent power?

In all the vital soulful swirling world,
that is your friend
because some ragged motion in you,
grows and slows and tangles,
frets and swirls, responds and sounds,
do you find the electric pregnant earth,
that is your friend
because some timeless fighting feeling in you,
intricately curls and slips,—
unfurls in sticky young elastic things,
and old dead rustles sifting softer dust
and settling—and being electric pregnant earth all more?

Child—in all your being,
that is a friend
because the winds and waves and storms and days,
and hills and trees and rays and beams and seasons
beat and move in you,
do you find a harmony of Whole,
that is a friend
because its all vast being seems you
and you seem One?

2.

A wave it was
And I alone
Was being it along a shore
A light and paining weightless shore
That I was being too.
And many hourful whiles
I lived
My timeless life
And went and broke my being
Upon
The shore I was.
And slipped into the rest of me
That was a sea
All but a sack of sand

I was, that left itself
Upon the shore
That I was being.
And all I did was
Moan and rise and moan
And fall
And pain away and break
And slip
In many hourful whiles.
All but the sack of sand
I was, that
Gave itself to
All the shore
That I was being
Too.
And soft and soon
I lifted me
Into a wind
That wailed a word
At all
That I was being.
And lifted light
The sand of me
And left it on
The wave I was.
It settled to be sand
Beneath
The sea that I was being.
In every dark place
That became
An hour of me, I rolled
And howled
And swirled
Myself
About
And knew I was.
And every
Groan
That I was growing

Wave and moaning
Flowing, I
Was making all the Me I had
Into the wave I was
And shore
That I was being too.
And leaving loose the sand of me
Becoming of
The sea I was
And doing so
Was close to you
And being deeply whole.

3.

The rain, wide drop-like slip of living lends
Its known exquisite quivering through the fall
From space and atmosphere and air and sea
And fleck and sand in wholeness of the sun
That being moon—looms cloud—plays beam found lost
In all the myriad lingered falling drops
Fearing wailing dying through the pool,
Living through the ripples of its song,
And swishing through the simple rhythm's shade
That sifts assail the misty moon-made day,
Till following dark, the lightless mist-made night
By played unshining daylessness of sun
Breathes leaving down the sudden slow half shock
Of water, marvellous with timelessness;
And soft black mists of breezes lift the leaves
All lustrous in the quiver flowing lake
And mist, slow folded, breathing, throbs and moves
In old, unweary, pool-wide samelessness.

ROBERT HILLYER

PROTHALAMION

LAMP of the West, held high aloft
By hand unseen of her whose name
Thou bearest; star when nights are soft
And earth breathes skyward the faint flame
Of pungent green wherein is mingled
Wild cherry's virginal, keen smell;
White Venus, singled
From galaxies to be the guide
Of man and bride,
Take thou our thanks for this thy miracle.

The silver-footed girl once crept
And leaned far out the window ledge
To ponder, when they thought she slept,
Thy twin lights at the water's edge;
Until as sparks among the embers
Die, thine image waned away,
But she remembers,
And for the wonder thou hast wrought
A votive thought
She offered on the threshold of the Day.

Yet spring was late this year; the snow
Still hid thee and the garden paled
Beneath a withered moon, as though
For once thy miracle had failed.
Thin oak leaves, ghosts of foliage, clung
Above the new year in the sheath,
And where they hung
Cold shadow hid the snow from day
So that it lay
Round every tree-trunk like a faded wreath.

Now comes thine hour. This marriage eve
Will I alone thy vigil keep,
While maiden-fingered fancies weave
For her upon the loom of sleep
Pictures of the inviolate land
More beautiful than snow, where she
Needs not my hand
To guide her, where she reigns in light
One last, long night,
Untrammelled by our fair conspiracy.

While I, leaning against the wicket,
Watch thy reflection in the pond,
And feel a rhythm through grass and thicket,—
My pulse of life, swelling beyond
My veins, beating through space and far
Away where even thy glories blur
O chosen star!
Yet she eludes us still this hour;
A chaster power
Than ours fills all the universe with her.

But thou and I shall call her back.
Love swoons in those vast periods;
Her feet stray in the heaving black
So far from the more homely gods.
O call her as she comes to me
Tomorrow in the lovers' dawn,
Clean as the sea,
Her gainly body tense with a surmise
That veils her eyes,
Not furtive but most regally withdrawn.

Behind her morning overarches,
Tiers of crimson fire that make
Greener the violent green of larches,
Bluer the calm blue of the lake.
The white swan drifts in mirrored sleep,
The haze is tangled in the rushes;
Clear and deep

A drop of dew rings in the pond
And fields respond
With songs of robins, meadow-larks, and thrushes.

Now, Love, I call thee, and am heard
By none but thee, I speak thy name;
I wed thee with a secret word
In accent quiet as a flame.
I say thou art the one who arrives
For ever, who never shall depart;
Through a thousand lives
When fields are sweetened beneath the sun
Thou art the one
Who wakes the immortal in the mortal heart.

Hasten! the world will crowd us in
With trumpet blast and wedding guest;
The loud solemnities begin,
The caravans come from the west;
The ships of sandalwood that smell
Sweet as the frankincense they bear
Drift on the swell
Like phantoms through the early haze,
Their lamps ablaze,
Their red sails flat against the moveless air.

Hasten! we have not long against
That hour of pomp when we must see
Our rocky garden neatly fenced,
Our love in mild captivity.
Now dawn spreads open like a fan
Of sultry fire, the wet leaves stir;
Girl and man
Pass through the elemental gate,
For spring was late
And now the summer has caught up with her.

At the waterside a tree is growing
Whose blossoms crowd the drifting air,
And of its fruit there is no knowing

Till thou hast tasted of it there.
Its dark leaves in the morning chime
Not of the morning or the night,
But of the time
Between the chaos and the flame
When softly came
The Word that made eternal love's delight.

Eternal the brief joy of flesh,
The finite infinite and whole,
The thwarted body fired afresh
By flames that mount into the soul.
The fruit shall follow the tree-in-flower
With ripe fulfilment after pain;
This is the hour,
The golden rift in time wherefrom
Surely shall come
The song of love-in-death made life again.

But thou, so young; more meet for thee
The birches tossing their green hair!
What blossom crowns the darker tree,—
Joy? But thy pain I can not share.
This night I yield thee back to sleep,
This night, the last of loneliness,
I fold thee deep
In peace and ask no more until
Dawn floods the hill,
Not even thy phantom-self for a caress.

And now the curved horizon covers
Love's star that melts away in light.
Lamp of the West, fail not thy lovers
When after another day, the night
Shall lift thee in its arms, and I
In mine shall hold thy counterpart,
Thou in thy sky
And we in ours, until we rest
Beyond the west
Where death lies slain beneath the single heart.

ROBERT HILLYER

THE HAPPY EPISODE

Dedicated to Evoli, Beata, and Qui

IN GUERNSEY as I slept I saw a young man standing in a tall vaulted room where the light from a coloured window burned from behind him. His garments were white against the broken colour, but as I looked I saw that he was girt in blue and that upon his head there was a coronet of golden leaves. He came toward me steadily, yet except for the shifting rays and shadows across his chest, I should not have known that he moved. When we were face to face, he stretched out both his hands and took mine in a grasp eager and lively.

I knew then that I had seen the Star of the West in this dream. Although it was winter, I at once set out from Guernsey and traveled to America to find him. That journey was a hardship, for he lived in the middle of one of the northern forests, and I had to go through eight or ten hideous cities, then through several villages, and at last by sleigh through the high January snow to a small white house on the top of a hill, just where the thick wood begins.

The Lodgekeeper came out of the house with a mug of steaming rum in one hand and a pair of snowshoes in the other. A stout man in corduroy, he was so tightly belted around the middle that when he bowed to me the belt parted, sprang to one side, and buried itself in the snow.

"You're welcome, Mr. Page,"—his voice was a gruff bass,—“and the Star of the West expects you. Just drink this hot rum for the comfort of your insides, and then put on these snowshoes. Asterisk House is just a few miles to the south of us—exactly how far I can not say, for I have never been there.”

"Snowshoes!" said I, "I've never tried them in my life! I think you'd better harness up a sleigh and drive me there."

The Lodgekeeper's red beard bristled straight out from his chin as he laughed at what was to him the greatest joke in the world.

"Go on!" he gurgled, nudging me with a blunt leather elbow, "put 'em on and let's hear no more about that."

I was still objecting when I had the misfortune to slip. I found myself on my back in the snow, feet in the air; and the Lodgekeeper was taking advantage of my reverse to attach the shoes.

"Now get up," said he, "and walk. And mind you keep 'em on, for the snow's twenty feet deep and as soft as sand."

It was at least twenty feet deep and softer than feathers. The wind picked it up in handfuls and flung it into my face. The trees shook themselves and splashed me with it all over like uncouth dogs shaking themselves after a bath in a cold pond. And, unused as I was to the snowshoes, I took head dives into most of the highest drifts.

"This is the grandest landscape I ever saw in my life," I said to myself, "and I hope I may never see it again."

The afternoon grew late and each mile longer. The orange lights on the snow were fewer and paler, and the shadows, which deepened from a light blue to a purplish black, tried to trip me up so that I dared not look at my feet. All about me were pines and hemlocks, their boughs curving to the ground with the weight of the snow, and scattered oak trees whose plum-colored leaves rasped in the wind in dry mockery of the summer sound. Someone went whirring through the wood with a pack of snarling hounds behind him, though I could see nothing but trees and snow, and them no longer clearly. I was beginning to curse my dream of the Star of the West and to wonder when the light would go out altogether, leaving me to the terror of an unknown and frozen darkness, when I came upon a stream, so madly whirling and roaring that not a finger of ice had been laid upon it. The stream was spanned by a narrow stone bridge and beyond that rose a great house above the front door of which was written in silver characters: *Asterisk House*. You know that I shouted with relief when I saw that, but you may find it hard to believe that I bounded

over the bridge without a tumble. I gave the iron-studded door such a blow that the wind slunk away to hear it. Or was it the shelter of the House which induced such profound quiet?

The door opened into a small entry. No one was there to guide me, so before the door should close and entirely blot out the diminishing rectangle of light, I kicked off those blessed snowshoes, shook the snow from the folds of my coat, and stumbled up a few steps to an inner door, which I opened.

There was the tall vaulted room and the Star of the West at the far end of it before a window of plain glass through which the fiery colours of the sunset glowed. He was all in white,—white shirt, white breeches, white hose, white sandals,—except for the blue sash around his waist and the coronet of golden leaves on his head. Steadily he came toward me, mottled by shifting light and shadow, until he stood before me and took me by both hands.

Then he burst out laughing; his nose wrinkled and his eyes almost closed with delight.

“Ho!” he exclaimed, very rudely as I thought, “what a sight you were in the Forest. I nearly killed myself laughing.”

As he was a very gainly young man, I begged him not to make such a spectacle of himself. “Besides,” I added, “I have just come all the way from the country of the Star of the East.”

As I had intended, this remark put an end to his hilarity. For the Star of the East, having risen rapidly toward the zenith, was threatening him with eclipse, and except for the protective hedge woven by Evoli to shield her beloved and turn back all curses in the manner well known to the Rosicrucians of recent years, might well have wrought harm to the Star of the West.

“Well,” said the youth, “where did he get that title I’d like to know—that tailless comet of the smallest magnitude. The world shall know him some time for an impostor. Look at this crown. It was brought to me with great homage by emissaries of the Hidden One of Lhasa. Now where

could that wretched comet ever get such a crown, unless he bought one at a jeweler's or persuaded the Masons to bestow one on him. Star of the East indeed! Study your astrology, Mr. Page; study your astrology!"

While he was speaking, organ music rose softly from all parts of the hall, and without apparently increasing in volume, grew in intensity until it vibrated through my bones like the current of a galvanic battery. I looked up into the windowless gloom above me and caught the glint of the great pipes, rank on rank of them, trembling out of silence with their exhalation of sound.

"It's only the Court Musician," said the Star of the West carelessly. "Come here, Echo!"

A door at the end of the hall opened, showing a brilliantly lighted closet crowded with banks of gleaming keys and stops. Another young man, also in white, but crownless and with a crimson belt, joined us.

"Echo, this is Mr. Page, whose passage through the woods afforded us such pleasure. Show him to his room." Then to me, with a sudden and grave courtesy, "We shall be obliged, Mr. Page, if you'll make haste, for we dine early."

At dinner the discussion was of literature. The Star of the West, the Court Musician, and I sat at a circular table amid an enormous gloom which ceded only the small disc of radiance from the candlelight glittering on the table cloth, the glass, and the silver. Globes of various colours showed the many different kinds of wine; the slow waltz that they performed showed the power of the vintage.

"Of all detestable literatures—and they are all rather detestable—the most detestable is the Russian," said the Star of the West firmly. I knew what he meant by that. The Star of the East had been born in Russia and had executed God knows what wildness there before withdrawing to the comparative calm of Guernsey.

"The Russians have no magic," he went on, absently drawing a crescent on the tablecloth with the handle of his knife. The figure immediately burst into flame and ascended to the ceiling, where it burned on for the rest of

the meal. But it was not for me to be impressed. I didn't so much as wink at this exhibition.

"And all who originate in Russia are palpable fools, incapable of any miraculous effects whatsoever." He inscribed a ring of granulated sugar on the centre-piece. A ring of seven rose bushes sprang up, flowered vigorously, and produced a quantity of minimuscular bees that shrilled a falsetto buzz round and round the table.

I looked annoyed.

"Pray reserve these parlour tricks for a more naïf audience," I said. "Nature herself can do much better by transforming a canary bird into a cat in the usual process of digestion."

"Was I doing anything unusual?" The Star of the West grinned like a naughty boy. "O yes, I see." He brushed his hand over the rose bushes, which turned into butterflies and fluttered away into the darkness.

"Silly! Silly!" I shouted, quite exasperated at last. "I've often seen the Star of the East do better than that."

This sobered him.

"O well, if it's magic and such nonsense you're interested in, even my Court Musician can do better than the self-styled Star of the East. But I thought we were discussing literature."

Echo blew negligently on his fingertips and a deep, sonorous music, like nothing I had ever heard before, came out of them. But I beat my knife on the table and drowned him out. As soon as the shocked silence had lasted for a sufficiently long interval, I proceeded to eulogize Pushkin.

By these provocative methods, I finally drove the Star of the West out of his little magics, and in a fit of sheer temper, into revealing what I wished to learn. He became so embarrassed, so infuriated, at my indifference to his pranks, that almost before he knew what he was doing, he had blurted out the unrecalable words and inscribed the Symbol on the air. In such manner, at Asterisk House, on the sixth day of January, nineteen hundred and twenty, the Great Magic came to pass.

2.

Of a long summer afternoon, the enchantress Evoli would tarry in her forest, listening, until the air cooled and the shadows ran together, to the small music among the ferns and the grasses, for the season was well nigh spent and the birds sang hardly at all. Sometimes she would stand under the hemlocks, her finger to her lips. Then all the creatures of the wood would pause in their breathing: "Hush! Evoli is weaving her spells to shield the Star of the West from the wickedness of his enemies." Or more often she would stand on the rock of the cardinal flower in the middle of the brook. There above the brawl of water, she could hear the rush of wings in the air, the scuffle of feet in the thicket, and overhead the wind riding over the mountain with hooves of thunder and flying mane. And when she stood so, Evoli grew taller, until one would have sworn she were only a shaft of the sunlight falling through a gap in the leaves,—except for her two arms outstretched, and her long fingers twining round a cup which she ever held out to be filled. She was very like a white fire burning upward.

In those days I had become an emissary from the Star of the West to the polite world, of which he was curious to know if anything of significance ever was said or done there. I could assure him not, and would so put an end to it; but nothing would satisfy him. "Tell me everything!" he would say. And after a while I would come back from the cities to the Forest of the Asterisk with a brainful of stupidities.

"Go on!" he would say, all the flame in him leaping toward the unworthy object, "Then what did Mrs. Boggs answer?"

"That she never paid her servants more than four dollars a week when she was first married, that they were content with a bombazine frock in those days, and speaking of bombs, have you heard about the way the Russian anarchists are commonizing their women, but if only. . . ."

"Stop! Stop!" He would shut his ears then. "Please go back again and find something different."

"There is nothing different."

"There must be. Go back and find it."

So all that summer I was fruitlessly going back and forth, pleasing neither the polite company among whom I came smelling of the pine forest, nor the Star of the West, to whom I always returned with the stink of limousines about me. At last, weary of all this, as August neared its end I turned aside and followed the water brook down its course from Asterisk House to the rock of the cardinal flower, where Evoli burned and swayed in the shaft of sunlight, her cup held empty to the sky. She was singing as I came upon her.

"You have given your spirit to the void and your body to the earth. The sweet marriage is broken. Voiceless and blind, the parent spirit wanders in the void. Hearing the words of the singer and gazing on the white throat of the beloved, the parent body is weighed down by the unendurable banquet. Their orphaned thoughts huddle together in the desert and can not remember the path home. When my cup is filled with your tears then shall your King return to you from the Isle; then you shall know me again and in my house you shall be called the Triumphant. Love, and the street stones will light their hidden lamps for you; when you see the light you are on the path home."

I stood on the bank and called to her.

"Evoli!"

But not hearing me, she went on.

"Make haste, for soon it will be dark and the bridge of the sunlight will be drawn back over the western moat for ever."

"Evoli!"

She turned to me, and seeing who it was, laughed softly.

"You are careful of me,—for one, Mr. Page. Give me your hand."

I reached out to her and she leaped over to the matted bank. For a moment we stood there, listening to the water and to the strange voices which have given their name to the ruined village up the brook.

"Just in this little place," said Evoli quietly, "we have conquered for a while. Here there is only the ghost of human clamour which beyond our territory in full and abom-

inable life crazes your kind. Here Silence still bends over the earth confident of her worshippers." She paused a moment, as if turning something over in her mind then, having come to a decision, held out to me an inviting hand. "Come with me, for tonight we celebrate the feast of the second Pentecost."

Ahead of us, the long straight aisle of the forest was already glimmering into dusk, and whorls of mist lay coiled in the hollows. Our footsteps were muffled by pine needles; there was no sound of wind in the branches above us. But from the end of the aisle came the drone of a chant, and there was a figure moving back and forth. As we came nearer, I saw it to be that of a nervous little acolyte in a red cassock far too long for him which he kicked ahead of him at every step. He carried a tall taper that wavered in his hands and revealed in unsteady glimpses a flight of steps leading to an altar magnificently vested from top to bottom in scarlet, as for the Pentecost. The lad knelt a moment, mounted the seven steps to the High Altar, and one by one, lighted the candles thereon. They grew from spark to flame so slowly that once, afraid that one had not caught fire, he went back to it and kindled it in uncertain jerks for far longer than was necessary. At last the three candles on either side of the crucifix burned high aloft in the gloom. The acolyte backed down the seven steps, caught up his cassock lest it trip him, genuflected, and trotted off, blowing out his taper as he went. The leaf-shaped flames stood up straight in the calm air. Then the chanting, which had reached my ears as from the chapels of an immeasurable ambulatory, waned . . . died out altogether.

A gust of wind crept from the forest, bending the flames as it passed.

"The High Altar is prepared; I see glints of light on the monstrance," I whispered to Evoli, "where are the priests, the thurifers, the choir, and the devout?"

As she turned to me I was surprised to see that her eyes were full of tears.

"They have forgotten," she said. "All night the overturned censer will lie cold on the marble steps, and the

acolyte will sleep under the sky, dreaming of the birthday cake with candles on it that he had in his grandmother's rose garden."

While she spoke, a glory grew round her, so that I hardly heard what she said, but gave myself up to the awe that possessed me. The reflected lights glittered in her eyes, and surely a nimbus, faint but positive, was forming round her uplifted face.

I dropped on my knees before her and kissed the hem of her robe.

"You are . . ."

"No, I am not the Madonna. I have never sung any lullabys to God."

She put her hand lightly on my head.

"Come, we must return. The wind is rising and the stars are being blotted out."

I looked back at the High Altar. The flames of the candles were being dragged sideways by the wind. They lengthened tenuously, and one by one were torn off their wicks into the darkness. Before the last one went out, I saw a squirrel leap on the tabernacle and compose himself on his haunches to attack a large hickory nut.

As Evoli floated beside me down the path I could hardly see her. She seemed melancholy and made no answer to the occasional timid question which I put to her. Crestfallen at her neglect of me in favour of an evidently uncongenial mood, and melancholy myself at the thought of that cold altar with its pentecostal vestments blowing in the dark, I decided to leave Evoli at the crossroads and make my way back to the dirt road where my motor was waiting to take me to town. The thought of town reminded me that I had not smoked since I came to the wood. I took out a cigarette. As the light of the match careened against the shadows, I saw that our path was bordered by low walls of some smooth black stone, and that at my elbow a sheer block of onyx towered high into the night. The expiring spurt of the match showed letters carven into the rock, and lighting another, I read: *HIC JACET ARTHURUS REX QUONDAM REXQUE FUTURUS.*

Evoli waited ahead of me in the path, nor even turned her head to see what I was looking at.

"Evoli! I did not know that this was here!"

Still she did not answer.

I struck another match, and curving my hands around it, directed the light full on her. She was standing as if she were on the rock of the cardinal flower, holding out her cup to someone who stood in front of her. I tilted the light higher, and it fell on the laughing face of the Star of the West, who was amusedly gazing into the cup. The light must have dazzled his eyes, for he blinked and tried to look through it at me. As he lifted his head, arrowy glints shot out from his hair and came to rest on the underside of the overhanging leaves.

"What didn't you know was here, Mr. Page?" he asked casually.

"The tomb of one who was king and shall be king again."

"O, of course. It's always been here. But Evoli doesn't speak of it."

"That is not wholly true," said Evoli unsteadily. "I have spoken of it, and to you. Often in the past, occasionally of late. And I shall have reason to speak of it again."

Then she turned and fled away down the path behind us.

When I would have followed, I found the way blocked by the trees, which pushed me back with living hands.

3.

Metropolis is a seduction from cosmos.

That autumn I was an eager victim, for the Star of the West had adopted a new pose which, since he would brook no scepticism from his intimates, frustrated all communication between us. He was the erenite now, passing his days in meditation, and his nights in lamenting sins the very names of which were unfamiliar to him. He made great ado when I sat down to a meal, called me glutton when I picked a wishbone, and boozier or guzzler when I sipped my wine. Yet more than once I discovered him in the wine cellar inserting a straw into the bunghole of a cask, or in the cold

closet gobbling up mince meat. He stated his age as thirty-one, spoke sorrowfully of mortal error and decay, referred to the Forest of the Asterisk as his country estate, and brazenly asked my advice on a contemplated career in the Church. Poor Echo was forced to share his master's penance. All day the galleries and vaults rumbled with plain-song, and once, when the Court Musician ventured into the whole-toned scale, the Star of the West, shouting "Seducer! Corrupter!" at the top of his lungs, hurled the unfortunate organist out of the window. Echo confided to me later that he had envied my race the exquisite possibility of being dashed to pieces on the rocks.

The climax of this ridiculous pose was a pious wish offered by the Star of the West that "the fair debutante on the adjoining estate will find her happiness in a nunnery." When I had convinced myself that he was speaking of Evoli, I banged out of the house.

All day I wandered miserably in the wood. It was high autumn yet so warm that the forest panted, drawing its breath in huge dilations of trembling green. The light on fallen leaves was the colour of pomegranates.

I followed the course of the stream past the fallen bridge and the echo stone, through the Village of Voices, and so came to the rock of the cardinal flower. But Evoli was not there. I waited for hours, expecting with every trick of the changing sunlight to see her take shape before me, but she never appeared. For the first time the forest became untenable for me. The air grew chill as evening came on, and I was persuaded by so much disconsolateness to think not unkindly of the city. At this hour the crowds would be pouring into the streets, the lights would be coming on in the avenues like startled eyes opening from slumber. This would be the hour when the jingle of coin in the pocket and the view of a lighted shop window would be productive of a nameless excitement.

Abruptly I made my decision. I left the Forest, stopped at the lodge to change my clothes, and without a word to the puzzled Lodgekeeper, drove away.

The impulsion of that brief mood held me in the city

for months, long after the first snow. Winter in New York is so bland, so tamed. A domesticated animal one might say, though hardly domestic; for it is not city-broken and bemerds the streets with savage disregard of thin boots. Yet, though it may sprinkle from the elevated railways and wallow in slush, it never turns wild again; it never claws down the five- and ten- cent towers; it never sets its teeth into the fragile asphalt on which we still permit it to gambol, or distracts the attention of modern novelists from the horse-turds over which they delight to linger. Sometimes as I sat in a gilded lobby amid that hush of civilization, modulated but hardly broken by discreet conversation, and heard the tapping of winter's effeminate paws against the window, I thought of the wild beast, brother to this caged season, which roamed the Forest of the Asterisk, crunching great oaks in its jaws, paralyzing the brooks, and toppling over cliffs with a random swish of its tail.

Then suddenly, in the city, we hear more klaxons, and we know that spring has come. The streets grow big with moving vans, for reluctant gipsies are on their way to a cheaper or costlier apartment. By the angle of the mattress bulging from the back of the truck, by the chairs standing oddly on the sidewalk rather defying than inviting occupancy, we know that someone is on the make or is being unmade. It is spring in New York, and a million blind citizens will look about them saying, "What a lovely day!" because they have not seen day for so long. I myself generally indulge my vernal growing pains by driving round and round Central Park with a fast friend, in order to recover my eyesight after one of those debauches into which the city irresistibly draws the innocent.

Or sometimes I walk up and down the Avenue, busily greeting my friends. People are fond of me and always are ready to overlook major and minor faults because of my vast fund of apparent good nature, manufactured for this very purpose. A sort of popularity I have which has never caused any man to open his pocketbook in my behalf or challenge my ill-wishers to a duel. A specious but very obvious popularity, which keeps me bowing and grimacing like a mandarin.

During one of these promenades, a rather horrid young man came up to me. I was about to admit mistaken identity and politely go my way, when he grinned, exposing a row of golden teeth, and said, "Aren't you Mr. Page?"

I bowed and added my first name as is customary.

"I thought I couldn't be mistaken. I've seen your picture in the papers. My name is Muldoon. And I'm right glad to meet you, Mr. Page."

He held out his hand, asked me to excuse his glove (which I could not, for it was filthy) and fell into my pace. I found out that the reason for his intrusion was quite simple: he had seen my picture in the newspaper, justly concluded that I must be a celebrity, and therefore an object of his attention. Doubtless he had read—and admired—the unspeakable Bok. I was also informed that Mr. Muldoon was on vacation from Harvard, where he was taking his Ph.D. under the usual auspices. His breath was foul and his English noisome, but I gathered that he had mastered the Gothic forgery and was bringing his labours to fruition.

"The Yankee Santy Claus," he said with a confidential wink, "you know whom I mean, of course; the Yankee Santy Claus thinks my thesis one of the most important contributions to scholarship ever made."

"And your subject?" I was not so much interested as desirous of interrupting his nasal ecstasy.

"The faulty *es* in Caxton's printing of the *Morte Darthur*." Then he added in occult tones: "I count 'em."

Fool that I am! I could not forbear, even in his unsavoury company, of discoursing on that glorious book, and too late I perceived that he had checked up several of my remarks for the insertion of foot-notes far longer than they. When I mentioned Arthur, however, Mr. Muldoon looked puzzled.

"Is he in the book?" he asked anxiously.

"Most certainly."

"Well, how did you say you spell him?"

"A-R-T-H-U-R."

Mr. Muldoon beamed. "O, I am so relieved. Of course I didn't have to look him up, because there's no *e* in his name. I was terribly scared. I thought that you spelt him

with an *e* and that I had overlooked something really important. Dear me!"

He giggled, panted, and belched before he recovered his equilibrium. Then the talk went on. Yet, as a matter of fact, I could not feel resentment against this monster. He was ill-bred, pompous, and illiterate, but he was not a responsible human being worthy of blame or praise; he was something machine-made, a type, or, as Blake would put it, an emanation. It was quite apparent from the way he walked to his gustiferous sucking of his golden teeth that he was a product of cosmic ill-breeding incarnate in a man.

Again I ventured to interrupt. "What will you teach?"

"O, anything from Chaucer to Santayana,—probably Chaucer. You see, we've codified the humanities."

As his vapours swelled and declared themselves, I amused myself by fancying Mr. Muldoon in the country of the Star of the West. I saw this doctor blundering into the most obvious pitfalls of the many designed to confound stupidity. He would never know he had been entrapped, however; with a snap of his teeth and a flourish of his hand, he would be off again, sparkling in his own fashion. So delighted was I with this idea that I awakened from it with a start to find Mr. Muldoon making gestures of farewell.

"Good-bye, Mr. Page," he said, adopting for a moment a tone of real Christian endeavour. "Come and see us some time when you're in Bean Town. Mrs. Muldoon would be charmed to see you any afternoon at tea." Then, dropping this exotic ceremony, he confided, "We got married on my next year's salary at the University of Omaha. So long!"

As I slowly pulled myself out of the backdraught from his enthusiasms and split infinitives, I murmured, "The aristocrats of the world will never, under any circumstances, lay down a law. Meanwhile, I must get a drink."

I hovered on the curb waiting for the traffic to part, when my attention was attracted to a tall old lady who, caught in the middle of the street between the lines of traffic, was wavering piteously back and forth.

"Granny's down!" shouted someone.

True enough. The old lady suddenly folded at the waist

and went down in collapse of demoded draperies. So avid was the crowd for a sight of this free-and-equal demise, that for a moment I feared she would be torn to pieces for souvenirs. As I shuddered amid the confusion, taking some comfort in the scattering of the vermin before the tang-tang-tang of an ambulance, suddenly my arm was grasped firmly from behind. Turning, I saw Elvira, positively frothing at the mouth.

Now Elvira and her mother were superbly genteel people from the West, and I could not quite conceal my surprise that the young Denverine should be abroad not only without a chaperone, but apparently reckless of her mode of salutation.

"Ah," said I, disengaging my arm. "Terrible, isn't it!"

I waved my gloves toward Granny, who was being gathered up, fold after fold of broadcloth.

"Yes, turrible," Elvira answered impatiently, "but have you seen the Callahans?"

"The Callahans?" I wondered vaguely why Dr. Muldoon did not apply himself to a study of the *r* that flourishes west of the Alleghenies.

"Yes, the dancers. They've taken New York by storm!"

"I'm sorry; I haven't heard of them."

"Not heard of the Callahans! You effete Connectican! Then you must see them tonight. Mother has tickets. You must!"

I am always unable to devise quick retreats, and before the ambulance had changed its course from the hospital to the morgue I was caught.

In the taxicab that evening, my friends bubbled with ecstasy. New York, apparently, had no proper sense of beauty, and with that faith which can move the Rocky Mountains, they had set themselves the task of awakening the dead eastern soul. The Callahans, Ignatius and Lucia, were incredibly artistic; they were worthwhile and thrilling; they were (and the Mother's voice became tremulous) Followers of the Gleam. How inadequate sounded my "Indeed!" Enthusiasm born of hearsay is not uncommon, but never have I heard eulogies so fervid and so ungrammatical

of a totally unknown quantity, as those I listened to during the ride, across the sidewalk, and into the theatre itself. While the curtain swayed hugely wrinkling above the foot-lights, still my hostesses continued their bombardment. Either they feared that I might be unappreciative or that I might deem them so.

But at last the curtain noiselessly flew upward and their chatter ceased.

The scene was a forest in the late twilight of a spring day. One heard the silvery gurgle of the tree-toads, the sleigh-bell sounding peep of frogs, and sometimes the deep bass of a bullfrog like an elastic band plucked at uneven intervals. It was also the hour when the hermit thrush and the whip-poor-will sing their unique duet, the thrush note dying away gradually and the quick music of the whip-poor-will growing ever more eager with thickening darkness. All the wood was washed in translucent green, the imagined colour of regions far undersea. Liquid and cool it was.

The colour grew more opaque, and at the remote end of the wooded aisle, a glimmering disc lifted, expanded, became triumphantly vertical, and approached us slowly. It seemed very far away; its approach was breathless with suspense. Then it separated into two figures floating toward us from the depth of the forest, from the unimaginable to the dream. The moon must be rising, I thought, for the dancers' breasts are mottled with shifting light and shadow.

Someone in the audience coughed. For a moment, as if clouds had blotted out the moon, the scene darkened and flickered.

They were very near now. One could distinguish Lucia to the left. Her draperies hung round her in a mist, through which one could follow the sharp contours of perfection; her breasts underlined with crescent shadows, her thighs tense with controlled motion; her whole stature, one would say, the exact design from which the human female has been faultily executed. It was too dark to see her face.

She seemed at first a trifle hesitant and stretched out her hand toward Ignatius as if for support. He turned to her, his body swaying toward her in the rhythm of a slow

smile. He, too, in his taut slenderness, the muscles of leg and arm and throat singing together, as it seemed, to some unheard music, made me ashamed of the poor thing of flesh and bone which rested in my seat.

Just for an instant they stood there in proud immobility. Then, as the falsetto of insects mounted in ever-increasing excitement, they were not there. Springing apart with a swiftness that rendered them invisible, they separated, Ignatius to the right extreme, Lucia to the left. They danced in their places for a time, whirling and lifting with the grace and speed so long unrealized in the tables of astronomers. Suddenly, as if propelled by a power far greater than their own, they leaped toward each other and in midair met silently. They were united. A single glory hung there over the dew-drenched grass; in an abrupt and immense hush, hung, blazed, and again separated. The wonder of the matter was this: it seemed that the two creatures had actually merged during their aerial embrace, and in separating had exchanged identities. Certainly Lucia came forth from Ignatius's place, and where I looked for Lucia to reappear, Ignatius floated down, still dimly luminous from the exquisite passion. In their new positions, they danced again until little by little the glow went out and nothing more was to be seen. The orchestra played, the lights in the theatre blazed, and blinking as from a dream, I saw before me only the rippling surface of the lowered curtain.

Not even the applause could drown Elvira and her mother. Each with one of my ears at her mercy propounded Art. Wise in the devices of our stage, they would have explained the clever wiring of flight, the orchestration of a spring evening, the electrical effects of a twilight in the forest. But at last I was emboldened to be rude.

"Excuse me," I said, rising up and pushing past them, "I have to speak to some friends."

As I had supposed, I found Evoli and the Star of the West waiting for me outside of the theatre.

"Mr. Page, Mr. Page, what do you think of the Callahans?" The Star of the West regarded me so anxiously that I almost believed he cared to have my opinion. But

I turned to Evoli. She was burning low, that I saw at once; for her dark eyes alone now held the fire that once in the sunlight of late afternoon I had seen burning upward in the forest.

"Evoli, are you going to do this again?"

"Not again, Mr. Page. No, not again. I think we are through with that now. But when we . . ."

"We had to practice," cut in the Star of the West eagerly.

"This is just a sort of trial, a rehearsal. Isn't it, Evoli?"

She smiled at him, and for a moment the old radiance rushed through her veins and bathed her in a luminous cloud.

4.

"Why do you come back to me?" said the Star of the East sullenly. "Why not stay with your friends over there?"

He was a dark young man, serious with a purpose.

"Because I thought you were destroying yourself with these futile curses night after night."

"They will not be futile; even if I do destroy myself. To destroy oneself for some worthy purpose,"—his voice became fanatical,—"*O, Mr. Page, such destruction is the very secret of the new life. Destroy! Destroy! that the new may come forth. What if I do destroy myself! I will destroy him too. I am not futile!*"

As he spoke, a zig-zag of lightning traveled down a thunderhead that had gathered on the horizon. There will be Golgotha on Guernsey if I don't prevent it, I thought, and the victim will crucify himself.

"Look here: as a man who loves peace, I suggest that you try making peace with him."

He frowned at me and with a gesture bade me be silent. No one was near us. A cold seawind rustled the heather and on the sea itself a single boat flew before the gathering storm.

"To make peace would be to surrender. To yield a single point would be to lose the Universe. I tell you there is no compromise with one so frivolous."

"But he is young!"

"Young! He counts his years by the thousands, as you know. He was young by the Caspian in the streets of Atlantis, he was young when he called Osiris brother at Abydos; he was young when the sun was brought from Persia and the moon from Carthage to be wedded in the streets of Rome. He is anything you please, but never tell me that he is young!"

An old fisherman came up the path. Although he crossed his fingers nervously as he recognized the Star of the East, he saluted us courteously enough. A curious effect of the level marsh land and the weary light made him appear larger in perspective as he retreated down the path.

"My zenith is far," went on the Star of the East, "but it is higher than others. My advance is slow, but my orbit is longer. Judge me by your standards if you will. Measure me, time me. You will not find me wanting. But your Star of the West! What has he ever done, what has he ever said or thought that. . . ."

A seagull, tired of climbing the wind, swerved suddenly downward, brushing the head of the Star of the East as it passed. He gave an abominable scream and sprang to one side.

"You see," I said gently, "although I am unwilling to point a moral, I must remark that your nerves are unstrung by the evil you are constantly devising. Your curses, rebounding from Evoli's circles, come back against you. You are destroying yourself with your own power."

"No, I am not evil," he answered slowly, "I am merely necessary. And mark me, some time Evoli will drowse, some time there will be a break in the circle, and I will get through. I always hope that now is the moment. Perhaps if I try at this instant she will be drowsing. That is the hope which nourishes my hate. Now! Now! Perhaps at this moment! Listen!"

He described a strange figure in the air, the while murmuring syllables that hissed like serpents in dry grass. The storm heard him and answered in thunder. Over the top of the dyke of cloud, night, in an overwhelming tide, burst.

I would have stopped the Star of the East then, but it was too late. I was bound to my place without power to move or to speak, while, for the first time, I felt the onslaught of discarnate hate. The air about me tingled and whined; I felt the arrowy bombardment pass through my body and on, on to its target. And I knew that had I been the target as I stood there, I should at once have been resolved into my component atoms. Ever more violent grew the flight of horror; now it was a solid mass rushing forward across the ocean to sweep everything from its path.

The Star of the East faced the western sea. His hair was dragged back along the wind, his nostrils blown wide, and all his being strained with the outpushing of force. And my thoughts went over the sea with the black onrush. I could see Evoli for ever vigilant describing her whirlwind circles around Asterisk House. I could see her snatching at some part of her body as if she were struck, without once pausing in her cyclonic flight. And in the great hall of Asterisk House there would be complete peace. The golden pipes of the organ would be swaying forward with sound; the Star of the West would be laughing at the recollection of a joke told him once by the Pharaoh Akhnaten in the City of the Horizon. Or perhaps he would be putting his old conundrum to a new victim: "Which would you rather be, a Viking or an Arcadian shepherdess?" Then when the victim had chosen with due care, the Star of the West would tumble about with amusement, shouting "But you were both of them, if you only could remember it!" On the lonely roads near the Forest of the Asterisk, horses would tramp neighing through the night, and their unseated riders, sprawling in the bog-ditch, would curse the strange delirium that left them, too, agued with fear.

Is there no priest, I wondered, who could turn back this malediction, no solemn words of exorcism to curb the power darting forward with planetary speed and in spite of my will, recruiting its strength from me as it passes? In my mind I articulated sacred names; all the hallowed and innocent words that I could remember. But this force was older than mine. It was old before Bethlehem was built. It was

older than all else in the Universe except the magic to which Evoli alone held the key.

I felt my hand tremble, and knew myself released from bondage. I looked at the Star of the East. He was standing there with head drooped, hands nervously fumbling at his belt. All the strength had gone out of him. He was drained. Noiselessly he crumpled up and slid to the ground. Then I saw that his curses, turned back by Evoli's protective hedge, were crossing back over the sea. He was the target now of the fury he had engendered. While the storm burst over our heads, the tortured creature writhed in his own poison. Efficient but invisible weapons pierced him through and through, bludgeoned him, tossed him about like threshed wheat under the flail. His passive body thudded as it was flung about in the rain and on the soggy ground. From his mouth the black tongue dangled; his agonized hands clawed deep into the roots of the reeds; but always those sullen, bloodshot eyes sought mine with fanatic amorosness of suffering. Now indeed his immortality itself was threatened, for he had become a creature of nerves and bones and flesh, the creature of that mortal evil with which he had deliberately armed himself. And I knew that in a moment the Star would fall into the sea, and in one sibilant protest, expire.

Then it was, then in the final horror, that help came to him. Over the shattered body there appeared a wide nimbus, a glimmering ring, which sang with speed like a bullet. It came closer, clearing the air of the pestilence; and though the storm still pelted and wailed, within that circle there was peace. The Star of the East gave over his struggle and slept like a child. The nimbus vanished. Evoli swayed before me in the darkness, her tired loveliness frailer than a cloud by moonlight.

"Ah, Mr. Page, I thought I might find you here. And perhaps you expected me. We who are bystanders know more of each other than the participants in these matters."

She smiled at me, but I saw that she might flicker away and took her hand to strengthen her. Yet the immortal at the low ebb of her powers was so much more powerful

than I, that I felt myself almost godlike at the touch.

"I need your help, Mr. Page," said Evoli, pushing me from her. "In the first place, I cannot touch him, for then he would be renewed a thousand-fold and destroy the Star of the West. He is more of your race than of mine, now; he is waning. Can you carry him?"

I bent over the Star of the East and tried to take him in my arms, but the best I could do was to lift his shoulders and drag him. His house was not far off, and alternately hauling him and letting him slip back into the mud, I slowly covered the distance. Evoli meanwhile floated before me, calling me by soft names which, in her agitation, she forgot were never intended for me. Yet without their stimulus, I should never have gained the house.

It was a great empty tithe-barn. Space, apparently, was the single objective, and, I may add, so oppressive, so tangible was this space, that I felt as if I forced my way through a substance. I have had the same sensation trying to run through water or to hurry in a dream of menace. As soon as I had dragged the Star of the East over the threshold, however, the density became less; with every breath he drew, the pressure was relieved. It seemed that in the tithe-barn there was a condensed force which he was absorbing into his own body.

Through a broken window I could see the drenched half-moon climbing up from the fragments of the storm. Cloud after cloud she mounted the rungs of the east, and at last shook free and soared into the clear upper air. I was more alone than ever before in my life, though Evoli stood near me, and the Star of the East, resembling much more a debauched boy than a mispronunciation of the Logos, stirred in his sleep.

"You are frightened," whispered Evoli, "because I am frightened. For the time I have eclipsed you; I am between you and your own shadow. More than that, you have seen just a glimpse of that war in the spirit of the world, compared to which all the wars of nations are no more than the twitches of a sleeper in whose brain the nightmare rages. but this is all you have to go through. Take heart. In a

moment I shall be gone but you have nothing to fear. I must go back to the Forest of the Asterisk before he wakes. As for you, Mr. Page, you had best row over to town. You'll find an old rowboat in the rushes, and the fisherman, Jason, will come as soon as you whistle for him. You know where I mean? In the rushes at the end of the path where you were standing. And come back to us soon, Mr. Page."

It seemed, then, that Evoli was unconscious of my existence. Rising on her toes she hesitated a moment, then mounted in ever widening spirals and glimmered out among the high vaults. Long after she had vanished came back to me the drone of her song. And though I understood the words perfectly at the time, when later I tried to recall them I found that they were in a language I have never known.

As soon as she had gone, I left the tithe-barn and followed the path down to the shore. In the rushes at the waterside a boat was drawn up, and whistling for Jason, as Evoli had instructed me, I got in. Presently I heard the sound of heavy boots sloshing through the marsh. In a few minutes Jason was beside me, looming gigantic in the wet light. Already panic-stricken by the abominable things I had witnessed, I found myself cringing before this phantom of moonlight and the sea. But he spoke kindly enough, and I suddenly knew him for the fisherman who had passed us earlier in the evening.

"You're the gentleman who was with that one who lives in the tithe-barn, aren't you? Perhaps I oughtn't to say it, but you're young and mayn't be any the worse for a bit of advice. The one there who lives in the tithe-barn won't come to any good, Sir. I don't know just what's amiss with him. It's not wine or women; it's not any of the Ten Commandments. It's something Moses, being only a man, didn't know about."

He pushed off and rowed toward the sprinkled lights of the coast town. I made no answer to his comment; I was too tired even to be curious. And the lull of the boat's motion through the night and the smoothly breathing water was too pleasant, after so much turbulence, to be broken by a word.

When we reached the wharf, I clambered out, and turning to pay Jason, saw only the black water tossing the flakes of moonlight from wave to wave.

5.

It was late summer again. The cardinal flower bloomed upright over the brook, and the fringes of the bracken were turning yellow. The little graveyard amid the forest where lay the people who had once lived in the Village of Voices, and who still lingered there, was hidden in a dusty choke of briars.

Death fascinated the Star of the West. He delighted to read the lichen-blurred names on the stones; sometimes even to stir the heaped leaves with a stick, apparently with a gruesome intent of uncovering some relic of the dust. Death fascinated him because under no circumstances,—or so I believed,—would he ever be called upon to deal with it. He could sentimentalize over it by the hour, as the wealthy shed tears over the sorrows of the poor.

"Ah, Mr. Page," he would remark to me, rather tactlessly as I thought, "I wonder how long you will be with us. It is desolate to think of being without you; I have grown quite fond of you."

"You needn't buy an onion yet, my friend. I shall last forty years more."

"Forty years! When one counts one's life in such terms, doesn't one devote each year to the cultivation of some rare and exquisite enjoyment? There are so many pleasures to choose from and years are so few."

I became glum.

"I do not count among rare and exquisite pleasures listening to my own funeral oration, and, if you have no objection, I'm going back to the city."

"No, please don't! There are very important doings to-night. Really! Asterisk House will be crowded."

A metallic hammering rang through the wood. It was Echo, whose latest venture was a smithy for unicorns, which kept him extremely busy.

"I think we may afford to ignore that," said the Star of the West firmly. "You will stay, won't you?"

I promised because I could not imagine Asterisk House crowded, and I was curious to see what company the Star of the West would assemble.

As a matter of fact, when I entered the Great Hall that evening, it was quite empty. But something was afoot. It was brilliantly lighted (and this was unprecedented) by hundreds of tall wax tapers. Never before had I seen to such advantage the unusual decorations of the place. The tall columns which supported the vaults were intricately carved with scenes from the life of the Magna Mater. On the first column, she was to be observed coming forth from the liquid of generation; a primitive Aphrodite arising from the sea of the First Matter. On the second, she was the twins, Isis and Nephthys, as Isis suckling the infant Horus, and as Nephthys girding on the Beloved's sword with which he should slay himself. On the third she was Ashtaroth, winsomely driving the snails who propelled her moon-chariot over the clouds. On the fourth, she was the large-breasted Demeter and beneath her Proserpine died and was raised from the dead. She then became Aphrodite, whom Adonis on the reverse of the column cheated everlastingly. On the sixth column she was Artemis, speaking counsel of chastity to Hippolytus while the King of the Wood fondled her and Endymion glowered from the shadows. On the seventh, she was the Virgin Mother, suckling the Future. On the eighth, she was Mrs. Mary Baker Glover Eddy pushing shut a closet door on the protesting Dr. Quimby. On the ninth, Mme. Blavatsky was being torn asunder by Miss Katharine Tingley and Mrs. Annie Besant, each of whom brandished a still-born Messiah in her disengaged hand. The tenth column was unadorned.

Evoli entered the Great Hall.

"Go on with your inspection, Mr. Page. You have much to see, and I, to do."

She hastened through the Hall and ascended the flight of stairs at the farther end.

The frescoes on one side of the hall were devoted to Fear

in its various manifestations. Here were depicted the patriots and demagogues frightened into atrocious heroisms lest they be thought cowardly; here were the debauchers of women who fear that their manhood may be questioned; here, too, were the pale ones who fear for their virtue; or, more basely, for their good report. Here were the seekers in stealth after praise, the poets who compose lyrics of passion and compound lecheries with their charwomen, the wealthy who take refuge in show from the gaze of philosophy, and all the thousand pretenders in the state, the arts, and the education of youth, who tremble at the thought of One Open Eye. Here, too, was Set, who betrayed Osiris, and Judas, who betrayed Jesus.

So lively were these portraits, that although from a distance their effect was gaily decorative, I turned from them in relief to the other wall, on which were represented the different embodiments of Courage.

Pharaoh Akhnaten, the old friend of the Star of the West was here, basking under the many-handed Sun; Queen Elizabeth, one foot on the neck of a priest and one on the neck of a puritan, spoke peace into the darkness. Here were all the frail ones of sinew so unexpected: St. Louis, St. Francis of Assisi, and the metrists of the modern world; here were the men who dare face themselves in the solitude, and here, on the last panel, was the god who was not only crucified but crucified between two thieves.

On the other walls, one could observe the autobiography of the Star of the West; but concerning that, as Herodotus says, let my lips guard a religious silence.

I was interrupted by Echo calling to me from the organ closet. "Come and see! for here are even stranger things for your inspection!"

"Where?" I asked, expecting to see him open a door in the wall or disclose some hidden room behind the arras.

But he remained at the threshold of the closet, grinning and beckoning. And suddenly as he spoke, the music shouted from the organ pipes again.

"No tricks now, Echo. You know my distaste for your parlour magic."

He shook his head and repeated, "Come and see! Please, Mr. Page."

Behind the manual of the organ he had drawn aside a small curtain, behind which there was nothing but gaping blackness.

Echo seated himself at the manual, pulled out with great deliberation a number of stops, and put his finger to his lips. Presently from the cavern in front of me rose a hellish blare of jazz, a babel of voices, and negroid tenors moaning the words of a chorus, while just off their rhythm sounded the sullen crash of drums, the stuttering impact of cymbals, the drawl of saxophones, and the uneasy squeals of suffering violins. Snatches of conversation reached us from the darkness, as though different couples were whirling near and then jiggging away again.

"No you don't, Harry. Sorry; we've just begun."

"You're tearing my . . ."

"No, honest; I'm not drunk. Why, dammit, it's the . . ."

"Typhoid, and she's never gotten over it. I think she'd be much happier if she'd . . ."

"Please, May, just give me one more chance!"

Then the yell of the negro chorus stamped the air:

There's nothin' to do,
Because I'm so blue!

Silence.

Echo was busily shifting his combination of stops. I was about to forbid any further experiments with my nervous system when before me sprang up a blaze of light, and in such a profound silence that it seemed as if the whole scene must be enclosed in a vacuum, I beheld the negro jazz band beating their instruments and hundreds of maudlin couples shaking in every joint to a rhythm I could not hear.

The lights went out almost at once, and in silence and darkness which rendered it the more sensitive, my nose was made the next victim. I smelt stale perfume, dust scuffed from the dance floor and fanned by drapery, sweat, and the exhalation of gin.

"Turn that off, Echo!" I shouted furiously, "and remem-

ber your manners. I have heard, smelt, and seen. What I should taste I do not even want to imagine, nor do I want to profane my sense of touch. Turn it off! Turn it off."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Page. I just wanted to forewarn you; to prepare your senses one by one for the shock awaiting them all." Echo looked up at me with mournful eyes and stretched out his hand. Thinking this a gesture of conciliation, I grasped his hand; but he held me in a steady grip and introduced me into the Great Hall again.

The drum boomed, the cymbals clashed, the violins wailed, the negroes stamped and shouted, and dazzling light broke over a scene of confusion and merrymaking. Black and white evening dress, red, magenta, or blue evening dress, capered by; evening dress, the last of the emperors celebrating his most absolute triumph. Yet even now I could distinguish fragments or goutts of humanity protruding.

"No you don't, Harry. Sorry; we've just begun."

Elvira waved off a young man who was listing perilously to windward. She caught my eye and flung me a buxom glance.

"Typhoid, and she's never gotten over it. I think she'd be much happier if she'd forget poor Frank and marry some one else. O, good evening, Mr. Page!" Mrs. Boggs wiggled by, her tight draperies emphasizing the play of her buttocks.

"Please, May, just give me one more chance, and I'll . . ."

But Elvira's mother, without losing a step, shook her head at her husband. It was obvious that romance had ended in alimony.

I started toward the organ closet again, but the door was closed, and Echo was nowhere to be seen.

A shy faded little lady, steering her way through the dancers as through dangerous traffic, came up to me very ill at ease.

"Excuse me, Sir, but I must ask you a favour. They are all coming, they will all be here, and I've forgotten my notebook. Will you, could you, find me a pencil and some paper? Not a big, gross wad, you understand, but a little

tablet that I can slip in and out of my sleeve when no one is looking."

I handed her an old letter and my fountain pen. Her only acknowledgment was to examine me intently for a moment, and then jot down some notes which I took to be personal to myself.

"If I am to figure in this composition," I suggested, "perhaps you will tell me what you're writing."

"I will; I will indeed, Mr.——?"

"Page."

"Mr. Page; only escort me to a nook where I can make myself heard. There! thank you, this is better. You see, Mr. Page, I do want so much to succeed in this, and perhaps you can help me. It isn't as if I were an amateur. Lawsy! I've professed the art from earliest days. But as soon as I try to get peoples' names . . . O dear! I can't explain it! . . . I'm just hustled out. And then the next morning I never can find the exact house again. Every editor in New York City has been provided with my copy regularly every morning for the last twenty years, and I give you my word, I've never received one cent for any of it." She glanced down modestly and smoothed her dress. "But then, I don't know that any of it has ever been printed."

"Well my dear Miss——?"

"Miss Bella-Stout."

"My dear Miss Bella-Stout, what do you write?"

"O, Court Calendars, social events, character sketches. I'll show you yours, if you like, because you're the first name I ever got, Mr. Page, and I feel that I owe you some return for that great kindness."

"Do let me see it," I said, more alarmed than egotistical.

She gave me back my envelope, on which were jotted some rather illegible remarks. I detached a few phrases and studied them out.

"I think, if you don't mind, I'll take charge of this for you and see that it gets to the editors." I folded it and put it into my hindermost pocket, determined that under no circumstances should any eye but mine light on that paper. Miss Bella-Stout looked anxious.

"Are you perfectly sure you can get it printed?"

Nodding, I planned a manoeuvre for the recovery of my fountain pen.

"Of course," she went on, "I'll share the publicity with you; that would be only fair. And you will be quite a public character when people read that about you,—won't you?"

"Indeed I will. Just hand me my pen a minute and I'll take down your address, Miss Bella-Stout."

"Really! O you don't know how thrilled I am!"

She handed it back to me, with an eager lunge, but I was spared the pretence of writing by a sudden hush that came down over the Great Hall. The dancers, shushing each other, ranged themselves on tiptoe around the walls, leaving the central space clear.

The windy tones of a muted trumpet announced the theme of Excalibur, and down the grand staircase came two knights at arms who were met at the bottom by a group of monks, and provided with tall extinguishers. The knights, treading as soft as snow, went the rounds. Pausing before the jazz band, they extinguished first the instruments and then the players themselves. The air grew loud with the sound of violin strings snapping and drum-heads bursting. I feared that they were about to extinguish the entire company, but instead, they turned their attention to the wax tapers, which two by two in perfect unison, went out. When all had been quenched but a row in the organ loft, once more sounded the theme of Excalibur, but this time from the mighty instrument itself. The blast from the pipes blew out the remaining tapers.

For several minutes I stood there in unplumbed darkness, in silence unrippled by a sigh. Surely from that company, waiting in nonplussed suspense for the apparition that should crown their folly, some nervous giggle would escape, some shuffling of feet or groping of hands. Why were they holding their breath? Why waiting there with life halted on their lips? I felt suddenly as if they waited a signal to rush at me. Conspiracy was going on in that stagnant darkness. But as my fear reached its climax, it reversed its nature and became a frenzy so dreadful that I cannot convey it. For suddenly I knew that there was no

one there at all; there was nothing there. Emptiness gaped around me; nothingness welled up from beneath me. This was the abyss of which I had dreamed as a child. This was the everlasting downrush of Lucifer quenched in his pride, clawing with webbed hands into the recesses of un-availing space. This was the chasm where hangs the nether moon, the chasm on whose brink I have so often trembled, to be released only at the mortal gasp by the notes of the hermit thrush. I heard them now, and immediately my heart grew calmer.

A glow appeared at the head of the stairs, outlining the arched rectangular doorway, and the Star of the West emerged sleepily, mother-naked, and carrying in his hand a lighted candle. This torch was the final absurdity, for its flame was hardly visible amid the cold radiance which poured from his own body. He blinked into the well of darkness below him, then called out in ill-dissembled surprise, "Are you there, Mr. Page?"

"I believe so." In the face of my high deliverance from dread I could not make my tone as truculent as I wished.

"Where's Miss Bella-Stout gone?"

"I suppose she put on vanishing cream and disappeared," said I with as much irony as I could command.

He was determined to throw me into a rage; that I could tell by the peculiar sweetness with which he put the next question.

"What's the matter? Have you been walking in your sleep?"

I ignored him.

He bent his shining head nearer the candle and pored over something which he held in his left hand. He looked at it, chuckled, looked toward me, chuckled again.

I felt in my hindermost pocket. Miss Bella-Stout's notes were gone.

6.

"I am delighted with Sir Thomas Malory; I am delighted with Sir Thomas Browne; I am delighted with—and since no one else has knighted him, I will—Sir Thomas de Quin-

cey. Ah, Mr. Page, when all is said and done, it's the doubting Thomases to whom we are indebted for the art of letters."

The Star of the West stooped to buckle his shoe. We were walking through that meadow which extends from the Forest of the Asterisk to Mortlake, broken only by the skeleton of an old farmhouse, and brought to an abrupt halt by three uncompromising hills.

"Once every two hundred years, when the world is very weary of fact and controversy, Thomas comes again amongst us." And regarding me sharply, he added, "One is not due for a century, and your name is not Thomas."

"Why, my friend, in the midst of this serene afternoon, when every thought lies horizontal like the meadow we traverse; why now, as at other more appropriate times, do you choose to bait me?"

"If you will have it," he answered sullenly, "because I suspect you of biographical intentions."

"Never! Autobiographical, perhaps; you might appear as the minion of my less elevated days. But never biographical! Besides, your biography has already been written from your birth to your death."

He was egotistical enough to ask me where, but I refused to tell him, rather enjoying the advantage I had gained by arousing his curiosity. To speak frankly, I was beginning to tire of his use of me as a well-tempered clavicord; I had no desire to be merely the instrumentation for his more than fugual caprices.

"Sit down," I said as sternly as I could, "I want to preach you a sermon."

He obeyed like a child, and while I continued my discourse, observed with delight the universe of the bugs and the beetles.

"I know, my friend, what you are, and why you are. I know that in your noble fits you can ennoble your surroundings more than anyone in the world. I also know that in your freakish fits you should be the sideshow of a circus. You choose to reveal your petty sides to me. Your friend Page will stand anything. . . . No, I haven't forgotten the night when I first came to Asterisk House; neither have I forgot-

ten that you were driven into the Big Magic in a sheer fit of bad temper. If it's cleverness you're seeking, you must admit that on that occasion at least I outwitted you once and for all. But for my part, I am sick of cleverness; I loathe it. It is the source of all bad books, bad music, bad magic, bad everything. I am sick of seeing you pretend to be clever,—you, who gazed at your own reflection in the waters of the Deluge and hung over the town of Bethlehem!"

"Evoli knows my heart," he said, with disarming gentleness.

"Does it make her happy?"

"It keeps her busy!"

He grinned and rolled over on his stomach as if he would escape my tirade in slumber.

I kept silent, knowing that in spite of all his insouciance he was deeply curious and would soon be asking questions.

The September afternoon continued its business, ignorant of our presence. Dragon flies, their bodies enamelled in blue, green, or scarlet, hung over us in suspended flight, abruptly darting off at an unexpected angle. Clouds of gnats passed between us and the light, the keen note of their wings descending the scale as they went by us. I have known afternoons more beautiful, more heroic, than this, but in its golden peace it remains in my memory as the profoundest of them all. In a thousand orchards over the world the fruit was drinking in the last draught of sun which should ripen it; in a thousand fields the grain bent, though no wind persuaded it; impatient at last for the harvest. So, when his days are almost fulfilled, when autumn is upon him, may a man bend toward death, knowing that his soul, for better or for worse, is ripe for the garner.

The Star of the West looked up suddenly, as if, attentive to the soil, he had heard something which he must at once impart.

"I give my friends trouble in proportion to my love for them," he said slowly. "Have you heard Evoli complain? Yet what have I demanded of you to compare with that power which always, century by century, I draw from her living spirit? She is inexhaustible; I am insatiable. But

do not imagine that there is happiness or unhappiness in all this. We have, if you will, some of the problems with which you are familiar; it is our solution of them that would baffle you. Now let me preach the sermon. You are impatient, Mr. Page. You wind your watch every morning and chain yourself to time with a golden chain. Nothing that I have ever done, no prank of which I am capable, is as strange as that. As St. George I have slain the dragon; as King Arthur I have vanished to Avilion pledging my return; as St. Francis of Assisi I have discoursed, barefooted in the snow, to a congregation of wrens and chickadees, but never have I set in motion an ingenious machine to tell me when to die!"

"You wouldn't obey it, even if you did," I said. "If you were aware that your days were numbered, would not you, too, learn arithmetic? Alas, it's all too simple! Subtraction is all that is required."

I felt a hand on my head, and looking up, saw that Evoli had joined us. Shame possessed me. Before her, I could not bear to strip myself down to my mortality, I could not expose myself to the pity of one who had, I knew, a heart already too full of comfort for my frailty. She did not address herself to me directly, but to the Star of the West.

"You, my Dear, are going to be in danger if evening finds you so far from the Forest. As you see, the sun will be gone before long. And I cannot help you here. Will you persuade him, Mr. Page?"

The Star of the West sprang to his feet, and upon his face sat the most awful wistfulness which ever I have beheld. The colour fluctuated under his translucent flesh, his eyes deepened until they were as grottoes, and on his mouth trembled words which I have read as the dying utterance of one of the gods. But the words he spoke at last were none of these:

"Evöli, I want to know death!"

So it had reached him at last, the autumn with the songs of the reapers and the folding away of lost desires. In the bins of the Master's barn the grain is stored; the planets bend on their silver stems and fall to the scythe. There are

no stars which shall not burst with their seed and be gathered into the tithe-barn; no worlds which, after the sun has ripened them, shall escape the flail. Nothing has been said of the winter. Spring we know when the plough prepares the virgin for the scattering of the seed. Summer we know when there is murmurous dalliance in the vineyards. Autumn we know. But of winter nothing has been said.

Before the anguish of the Star of the West, Evoli, possessed by an even greater anguish, was powerless. She looked toward me, as if I could help her, and then at the young man's shadow lengthening across the grass. The skeleton of the house stood out in the orange light, taking on briefly a personality, sinister and aghast. If it had collapsed I should have been heartened; if lightning had struck it from the cloudless sky, I should have welcomed it as a fair omen; but as the dead house stood there amid the vast and abandoned meadow, every beam clear in the clear light, it became intolerable.

"I, for one," said I as lightly as I could, "am going back to Asterisk House."

"Alone," added the Star of the West.

"You'll come with me, Evoli?"

She shook her head.

"I may still learn a new orbit, in however strange a void, Mr. Page; though I confess I am not used to the tactics of comets,—in fact, have always rather despised them. One part of space, however wide, is home. I shall make a bad alien!"

The Star of the West regarded her with such melancholy intensity that for a moment I thought the miracle would come to pass, and her cup be filled with his tears. Kindly-wise he looked down upon us, as from the height of a new wisdom.

"Evoli, you had better go back with Mr. Page. I love you both, but I think I should prefer to meet my adversary alone."

To my astonishment, Evoli bowed her head in acquiescence, and beckoning me to follow her, set off at a swift pace down the path. When she reached the edge of the woods,

she waited for me to catch up with her, and without a word pointed out to me the direction which I must follow. But before plunging into the woods, I could not forbear to glance back across the meadow where the Star of the West lingered, now so utterly alone. Even from far away, I saw him rising like a pillar of light amid the flat land, the glory of his transfiguration jetting over him in a never ceasing fountain. Then I dared gaze no longer, but went on my way.

The path down which I walked smouldered in the red sunlight shot upward from the forest floor. The sun must have been very low, for the few rays that penetrated unbroken the ranks of tree-trunks and overhanging foliage lay horizontal along the air. Minute particles shone out. A spider web slung from tree to tree seemed as substantial as a red-hot wire. A midge no larger than a mote of dust hugely intercepted the light. This was the hour when grandeur melts into shadow, and the tiny things of the world, capturing the fragments of lost day, take on a sudden meaning. I observed all things meticulously as is the fashion with those who brood. Once or twice I surrendered my consciousness to the fears that underlay it. *Evoli!* I called in my mind, and again and again in imagination ran back to her with succour. But in reality, knowing that I should merely hinder her, mechanically I trod out my way.

The place was unfamiliar to me, yet I had no care for that. Summer was over; the world, weary of child-bearing as of her children, was turning away from the sun. And *Evoli*, too, was ready for the winter. Some time I would take her into my arms as if she were a child; some time I would whisper to her; "Lay by your immortality and let your spirit slumber in the cradle of flesh. Look! I have come back to you at the end of day and brought you the simple things of our human existence. Here are bread and meat and the wine of the south; and a cloak to keep you warm; here are books to read and a candle to read them by. I am stronger than you now. Your heart beats, you breathe the air with me, and in this fair copy of you made of flesh, life ebbs and flows. Is it not something to know that when you grow tired you can sleep, and when you are so tired that

no sleep can possibly restore you, then you can die! The poets and painters of another age gave to their loves the immortality of verse and colour, but I am kinder than they, for when you ask it of me as the one desire of your heart, I will give you death. Evoli, let me call you out of this haunted forest that from the beginning of time has held you captive; let me call you away into the blare and dazzle of my life; let me love you there and fondle you, waken you in the morning and at night watch over your first sleep. You are the rose of the world and there is no beauty in the world that does not make me remember you. I dare bid you come, for this is the hour when small things, capturing fragments of a great light, are of import, and if you would come now, you would not find me so small."

Lulling myself thus with an incantation, I had reached the shore of a vast lake surrounded by hills except where in the distance it stretched away into unknown regions. The forest crowded down to the water's edge, broken here and there by a strip of sand, a boulder, or a low cliff braced under the shoulders of the hills. By this time, the glow had faded out of the sky, leaving behind it the transparent green depth that so often succeeds a hot sunset. In the west, one dewy star trembled like a candleflame in a green mirror, and by its reflection in the water I saw that the lake was utterly still. But on the opposite horizon, where the darkness was already thick, had appeared a star so fiery that I supposed it to be Mars.

So as I lingered at the waterside where the path ended, I chafed with my helplessness, yet dared not turn back, for Evoli had pointed out my way to me and against it I would not go. And after a long while, as it seemed, I heard the sound of oars from afar off, and slightly later low voices engaged in talk. Around a spur of the hill which stood out into the lake swung the black outline of a barge with two or three figures in it. In this unknown country I felt unsure of them, and as noiselessly as I could, stepped into the water and stood among the tall reeds and sedges. They came directly toward me, ceasing their talk as if afraid someone on shore might overhear them. Presently I heard the hiss

of reeds parted by the prow of the boat, the thud of oars being shipped, and then the scrape of the keel grounding. From my position I could see only the strip of beach where the path ended, and it was several moments before the occupants of the boat, one by one, stepped into my line of vision. They were three women.

In the faint light I could see only their forms moving to and fro, but it seemed apparent that they were on the lookout for possible intrusion. They trod about stealthily, pausing now and then and stooping, as if listening for hostile sounds. Reassured, they gathered together in a knot where the end of the path was, and one of them struck a light. Now I knew that I had misinterpreted their movements. They had been piling up dry sticks for a fire. As the flames shot upward, none could have been more confidently at ease than they. They talked loudly and were at no pains to guard against surprise; indeed, had not some strange quality in their voices deterred me, I might have come forth to join what I was almost convinced must be a picnic party. An abrupt remark, rising out of the general babble, put an end to this supposition.

"The Master has set forth from the East. O Sisters! Soon he will be with us!"

Shrinking no longer from the firelight, I boldly swept with my gaze the small strip of beach accessible to it. Presently one of the women stepped into the central focus, etched clearly by the leaping flames and too clearly against my shuddering mind which strove in vain to reject the picture presented to it through my eyes. Not even the glow of the fire could tinge that grey and cadaverous face, the thin lips drawn back over the teeth in a perpetual leer, the tight skin over nose and temples and cheekbones like the skin of a corpse. Only her eyes were alive; they burned against the light as hard as coals and more strangely evil than anything I have ever seen. When the woman stretched out her hands to warm them at the fire, the light shone dimly through them.

The second woman was a fat negress with huge gold circlets in her ears. She had all the appearance of lolling good nature, yet observing her more closely, I saw that she was

merely a half-wit. Her eyes fastened easily on any object and as easily let it go; she champed her teeth continually even when she was laughing softly to herself. Occasionally her body rocked back and forth as if she were about to dance, and at such times she repeated over and over with increasing volume: "The Lawd is comin'. The Lawd is comin'. Glory be to Gawd on high!"

The third woman I shall not describe.

Presently the negress turned to her companions, and ceasing to jiggle a minute inquired anxiously: "Did you say our Lawd and Master is expected this evenin'?"

I listened for their reply, for by this time I was beginning to surmise the identity of this master of theirs who was coming forth from the East. But there was no reply. With an indifference evidently habitual with them, the other two ignored altogether whatever the negress said.

"It's my turn for the sign of the Goat," suddenly remarked the cadaverous one, speaking rapidly as if she expected contradiction.

"Then I'm the Ram, ain't I?" said the negress.

The third woman regarded her companions contemptuously a moment, like a monarch who grants some petition not because he is indulgent but because it is diverting. "For tonight," she said quietly, "I will be content with the Bull, but remember, please, that the Goat is mine except by courtesy." The other two nodded their heads emphatically.

So their talk went on in terms more and more unintelligible to me, broken now and then by single phrases only too clear in their significance. I gathered that these emanations summoned into existence by the Star of the East (for no human womb could have borne them) were whetting their corrupt fancies to a delirium of lust and cruelty in preparation for some feast yet to be vouchsafed them. Although the victim to be offered them was never indicated except by frenzied sounds of a distorted ecstasy, his identity was apparent.

After a while I must have drowsed standing, like a horse, for when my senses were called to attention by the sound of oars again, I started. Looking toward the beach I saw

that the fire had sunk to embers. But the weird sisters were still there, listening themselves, and whispering to each other.

Again a boat grounded on the sand, and again the figures of three women appeared on the shore. As this second group entered my vista, there was an instant's pause, a tick of silence. Then the first three hurled themselves shrieking at the newcomers, who fell back a few paces aghast and gave battle. There was little to be seen now, for the scuffle of contending feet scattered the fire in cascades of sparks. At first, voices made war as well as bodies, some of them pleading hysterically, some blaring out oaths, but as the battle became fiercer only the sound of labouring breath and sobbing mingled with the thud of fists, the explosion of slapping hands, and the ripping of cloth. Somebody went down underfoot with a scream that shot up into the air like an agonized fountain, and with the expiring gasp called "Evoli! Evoli!"

That was my countersign. Shouting madly, I burst from my ambush and plunged toward the knotted mass. In absolute surprise, the ranks parted before me, while from her perilous situation the woman who had fallen slowly disengaged herself. I cursed myself for my long delay as I noted how the newcomers, in spite of their dishevelment and hurts, still maintained a certain dignity amid the wreckage. So we stood there facing each other in a long and embarrassing silence. Since peace was restored, I could not bludgeon the three old women, nor did I dare address myself to the others, who stood in doubt of me, reminding me of wounded deer which cannot tell if the man coming toward them will bind their hurts or slay them. Finally I turned to the evil three.

"Go back to your boat," I said, with a pretence of boldness I did not feel, "and never again land on this shore."

During the short interval which followed my command, I braced myself for the assault. But none came. Slowly and in silence, the scale dipped in my favour; the weird sisters were actually afraid of me. I knew it and exulted.

The unmentionable one turned to her companions.

"Come Sisters!" she said quietly, and led the way to the shore.

The negress, who followed her, could not resist an examination of me as she passed. Her eyes rolled toward me in their sockets, and when at last her curiosity was sated, giving me a knowing wink, she went on her way. The last one also looked at me as she passed. Like a grey ship swinging at anchor on a changing tide, her grey face swung in my direction and from her eyes hatred blazed.

"You have meddled once too often, Mr. Page," she whispered.

They embarked in their boat without more ado, rowed out into the lake, and so were gone from sight.

The three ladies had also vanished, but from the undertones in the thicket nearby I knew them to be pondering what attitude they had best adopt toward me. To be sure, I had saved their cause, yet I was as much an unexpected encounter as the three who had left us. To relieve them from a quandary, I was going to withdraw along the beach, when I heard Evoli's voice sharp and clear through the hush:

"Come now! Come now! Hurry! Hurry!"

The poised arrow within me was released at last and I sped down the path with the speed of light.

"Come now. Hurry."

Evoli and Echo, between them carrying the Star of the West, came lurching toward me down the path. His arms dangled from his shoulders, which Evoli supported; his knees, held up by Echo, cut sharp angles against the sombre clothes of the Court Musician. His face, in half profile against Evoli's breast, was stamped with content; the young, jeering mouth relaxed, the eyes closed, and the hair curling like tendrils of a golden vine over the white marble of the brow. In his left side a foul wound gaped.

"Help us, Mr. Page."

I took the Star of the West into my arms without effort. So light was he that neither my breath nor my heart quickened as I carried him toward the shore. With alert anxiety, Evoli and Echo watched over my assumption of my

easy burden, as if fearing that I might derange a single curl or let one finger sweep the unworthy ground.

I looked at Evoli and formed with my lips the question: "Is he dead?" She shook her head and articulated one word in reply: "Never!"

When we reached the shore, the three ladies were embarked in their barge again, and to them, at a sign from Evoli, I delivered the Star of the West. A cry of lamentation broke from them as they took the Star of the West into their boat, and one of them, the youngest, spoke dolorously: "Yet again he has come back to us broken, the fair body marred beyond mortal help. Alas, will he never come with us in the full light of day, moving freely on his own feet! I am weary of these starlight meetings and the woe that is always ours. My brother, you are sore wounded again, though I hoped to see the sun at midnight when I hoped to see you with us in lively beauty." So she mourned and wept, and taking his head into her lap, she ran her fingers through his hair while her tears fell hot from her eyes on his upturned face.

Then the other two took up the oars and rowed their barge out into the lake. We three who stayed had no heart to move or to speak, but stared before us into the night long after the barge had disappeared round the spur of the hill.

7.

To get help for the Star of the West, I had come to Boston to see a friend of mine who had just taken his degree in magic at the Museum Clausum, but enchanted by the magic of my city, I had passed several days wandering through the rose-tinted streets that climb upward from the blue waters of the Basin, to meet in geometric triumph where the dome of the State House floats over the whole design like a golden bubble. Whenever I set forth in the morning toward my friend's house, I would lose myself in the contemplation of the gulls which, by some instinct for

perfection, add their whiteness to the subdued rainbow of the old town. And I was held, too, by sentiment. Beauty and memory interpenetrate each other, for all that is of the past seems lovely, and we can gaze on nothing lovely without investing it with the romance of the past. Thus, when I had sated my eyes gazing at the haphazard elegance of Beacon Hill, I would follow Cambridge Street to the core of the old city, and with Scollay Square as a centre—ignoble Tabard Inn of so many pious pilgrimages—would thread my way through a hundred baffling alleys and crooked lanes, guided unerringly by the ghost of that boy who had been I.

This kosher restaurant was once the Hotel Venice, where wine and food were excellent, and where, to a dining room entirely empty except for our little group, two defutated sirens, perched in the prow of a gondola, played on the piano and violin. As the Orvieto inflamed us, the anxious ladies observed every nuance of mood and adapted their concert to our emotional needs. When talk was bawdy or martial, they burst into a rollicking Sousa march; if philosophy engaged us, they would float our ideas on a tide of Ethelbert Nevin; or sometimes when the talk was low, the old songs stole again over Hanover Street, pleading to the ears of passing Italians a prompt return to the Old Kentucky Home or the Swanee Ribber. And one night, when Downes and Damon and I were purging our spirits with tears, "Hearts and Flowers," that ultimate catharsis of all music, wrung our eyes again. The sympathetic waiter hovered near us, and to him, I thought, some explanation was necessary. "You see," I informed him gravely, "We have all lost our mothers." He understood at once.

The gondola is still there, for I saw it only the other day, but the brass curlicues at Frank Locke's have disappeared. They always spiralled toward heaven when a hop-toad succeeded a sherry flip and stingers succeeded the hop-toads, yet Dos, then given to the absurd notion that drunkenness was wholly psychological, would read aloud from the Apocrypha if anyone so much as hinted that the curlicues were in motion. In late vindication, they have indeed spiralled

their way into heaven at last, and now, in some celestial tavern, befuddle the immortals.

Some heavy hand has been laid on this city since I first knew it. There is no shouting or capering in the streets after nightfall. The Pretty Girls Upstairs have become a tailor's shop. In faded ballet dresses, these dancers would march round and round the little music-hall stage to the tune of the Star Spangled Banner, while sailors, released from patriotism for an evening, lolled cheerily in their seats. Suddenly the strains would cease, the trollops would come to a halt, and someone on the stage would drop a penny to the floor. Then would the Bacchic audience be deceived into thinking that coins were being thrown in applause, and pockets would be emptied in the effort to overwhelm the ballet in copper. A few dates would be bawled from the stage to aspirants below, and the curtain squeak wearily to the floor, the roller dropping with a thud. Downstairs there were pretty girls also, in penny cinemas, wherein one regarded a bathing beauty to the last stitch, at which point, with a puritanical click, the picture would come to an end.

The Naphtha Lights, too, are gone, and often I have wondered where Cuthbert can find romance in these electric nights, for to him the flare of a naphtha light was the very beacon of amazement. "We will walk," he would say, when the last liqueur was spreading uncertainty in the mind, "we will walk until we find the naphtha lights." And somehow, in obscure alleys which by daylight were never seen again, we always found the naphtha lights flaring in the dark.

When I remember the comrades of those days and consider the inevitable trend from poetry to prose, from conjecture to scholarship, I become disconsolate. There was something afoot which gilded the ancient city, which roused silence out of its torpor, which,—so the Star of the West, who is nothing if not candid, informed me,—concentrated several important forces for a while. Perhaps, great Mitchell, you do not remember the night when you saw the Star of the West reflected in a glass of champagne and refused to acknowledge him. "Give him time, give him time," you thundered, "and he will burst like the other bubbles!" But

all the way back to your rooms in Fairfax he followed you; and when, the next day, Cummings rudely forced a way through your transom, it was not rage alone that made your voice tremble, as you rose up in your velvet dressing gown and bade him be gone.

One used to hear the centaurs stamping in Mount Auburn, and when Hesperus grew large over the Charles, the boat of Osiris could be seen drifting down the river. And there was a fence far up the river, where, if one sat of a February night, one could feel the spring blowing northward.

Accompanied by phantoms and memories such as these, I loitered through several days, and not until Sunday afternoon could I make up my mind to seek out the magus. He had, of course, foreseen my arrival and arranged for it. But as soon as I entered his house I knew, by the care he took to impress me, that he was of no avail. Everything was in order. I was anointed by experienced hands, I was censed with the rarest gums and spices, and of the rarest foods and vintages I was given to eat and drink; all this while my friend remained behind the scenes. As I observed the decorations on his walls, I was too conscious of his eyes to indulge on my face the satire that filled my mind. In very corrupt Gothic lettering embellished with stencilled flourishes were invocations to the "Seven Stewards of Heaven to whom is given the mastery of this world." If I have aroused anyone's curiosity concerning the names of these individuals, let me inform him that they are Arathron, Bethor, Phaleg, Och, Hagith, Ophiel, and Phul. Beneath the salutations was inscribed this bit of wisdom: Aglon Tetragram, vaycheon stimulamaton ezphares retragrammaton olyoram irion esytion existion aryona onera yoneion lingamion brasym moyim messias soter Emanuel Sabaoth Adonai to adoro et te invoco. As I pondered these syllables, demeaning myself as seriously as I was able, I reflected that anyone who actually placed any credence in all this would never dare inscribe such verbal Hell-fire on the walls of his private dwelling. They were there simply for effect; even black magic, it seemed, had been thoroughly modernized.

Presently the folding doors at the end of the hall were flung open, and my friend quite unaffectedly took me to his heart.

"I see I can not deceive you," he exclaimed, "but the ensemble is delightful, don't you think?"

"Perfect!"

"Yet I will confess to you that while I have facility in the Black, in the White I find myself a novice. I am in dread of dying as a brother of the Left Hand. Perhaps," he added, ruminatively frotting his shanks, "perhaps it is because I can not for the life of me apply myself to Hebrew; and then, perhaps, it is because I am not a virgin."

"It's neither the lack of Hebrew nor virginity which hinders you," I answered. "You have, as a matter of fact, become personal, and there's an end to everything."

"You're probably right. I have long since learned that nothing from the Book of Opening the Mouth to Eliphaz Levi is of slightest consequence. I know now as well as you do that silence is everything. But how in the name of all that's holy can one abandon a rôle?"

"I suppose you'll have to play it out," I admitted.

"Of course," he went on, "it's not wholly my fault. I really was acquiring some knowledge of my art. You remember, perhaps, that evening when . . ."

I cut him off with a nod of my head.

"Well, shortly after that, I met a young man, a so-called scholar named Muldoon."

"Not an odious little creature with golden teeth, a foul breath, and a respect for Gothic roots?"

"The same. Don't tell me you know him."

"I've met him."

"Well, steer clear of him. He's a bore and worse. One day in the Library I was going out, my arms full of books. Some of them, I remember, were by Iamblichus, Böhme, and Cornelius Agrippa. Muldoon, a complete stranger to me, scanned the titles of my books with some care, opened a conversation with me, and pried into my affairs. I rage when I think how affable I was! He then brought up a friend of his, a student of occult literature, and the long and

short of it is that I fell under the influence of this man and began a meticulous survey of all that has been written on the great subject. You know the old phrase about the letter and the spirit! I lost everything: all the memory of my initiation, all my budding powers, and gained . . . a bundle of facts, a knowledge of just which hierurgues have tried to express themselves and just how they failed. And, as you see, I am reduced to inventing symbols and experimenting with colours. Page, I can do nothing! The door is closed. I am as helpless as a medium whose feet are too closely watched. And I tell you frankly, I should have tried to deceive you if I had thought there was any chance, but at least I still know enough to recognize my superiors."

"And yet," I said, as a new idea occurred to me, "I'm not so sure but that you despair too early. It strikes me that you may be able to help me after all, and perhaps regain something yourself."

"How? I'll do anything," he said earnestly.

"Is there in this town one bar where decent drink is to be obtained, malgré the monstrous regiment of women?"

He wilted with disappointment. "I thought you realized my predicament too well to indulge in such frivolity."

"Frivolity?"

"Fleshliness, then."

"With every word you say, the cause for your impotence becomes clearer. You are literally drying up. Fleshliness, indeed! Who taught you that,—Mr. Muldoon? What is the flesh but the instrument of the soul? Varnish it, man, varnish it!"

Presently I had jollied him into his coat and out of the house. He blinked like an owl at the sunset. Luckily I did not have to depend on him for a good tavern; I myself was well provided with information, and had asked him merely to test him. But he had no confidence in me or what I was doing; he had no confidence in his own memory, and constantly waxed more peevish. As we walked along the darkening streets, as much rebellion as his undernourished soul was capable of gathered within him, to burst in a last protest as we arrived at the tavern.

He held out his hand in good-bye.

"You refuse to try it then?"

"I've got a lot of work to do. You'll have to excuse me. Some other time, perhaps."

"You understand don't you," I said, commanding my voice as well as I could, "that you'll never have another chance; that this is the last resort? You understand that you are condemning yourself through eternity to sore eyes and a dusty nose?"

He was not impressed by my assumption of the prophetic mantle.

"It's you who don't understand. I tell you, I can not spare the time. I have letters to write, papers to go over, dozens of things."

Since he was now wailing like a thwarted child, I knew that his case was hopeless, and entered the tavern alone.

In the outer room a few drinkers, mostly policemen and undergraduates, lolled sociably at the bar. They were being entertained as usual by Grover, a sharp little man with a fringe of white hair, who every day was to be found at that bar drinking madly and wheezing out interminable stories of the race-track. His guts, I am convinced, are of pure gold, for he has drunk everything but *aqua regia*. He cried out with joy when he saw me:

"An old friend, gentlemen. Gentlemen! an old friend! Companion of my youth and beauty. If I could convince you, gentlemen, if I could convince you . . . if I could . . ." he plunged after his thought and fumbled it. "Step up to the bar and tell these gentlemen what I lost on Beau Nash. Step up to the bar, for they are a foul and unbelieving generation. You tell them . . . you tell . . ."

His eyes puckered with the effort to be consecutive, and half to himself he quavered a sentimental ditty of the eighties.

I was afraid Grover might detain me and flashed the bar-keep a signal to attract his attention to another drink. Then drawing aside the beaded portiere at the rear, I entered the café, which was empty.

The room was dimly lighted by two or three gas-jets

turned low. Above the mirrors that lined the walls, one could just discern the smoke-bitten frescoes: Cyprian figures woven in and out in all the tiresome ingenuities of the Persian garden, which, by suggestion, now grown so faint, of lecherous delights, must have inspired many other desires than the thirst for good drink. Now the pictures were gruesome, for the decay of plaster and pigment had transformed the lovers into a Medean assortment of *membra disjecta*. In its altered state, the fresco was a macabre masterpiece, a mediaeval cycle devoted to the transformation of bawdy-house into charnel house. The mirrors were almost as grim. Misted and flyblown, they gave back to me as my own the poxiest of faces.

To summon the waiter, I banged my iron chair on the floor, at which he immediately appeared, as if he were astonished at any sound of life from that room. As he took my order, he asked me if I wouldn't prefer to join the company outside.

"Certainly not. . . . And make that a triple Bronx, please."

"Yes Sir . . . if you're sure you're quite comfortable here."

"Why shouldn't I be?" I asked sharply.

"I don't really know. I shouldn't like to say. Excuse me, Sir."

I noticed that he glanced quickly into one of the mirrors as he left the room, and I shifted my seat so as to be under that mirror when he reappeared. The effect was, as I had hoped, extraordinary. He stood in the doorway, desperately at a loss, his hands trembling so that my cocktail splashed over the brim of the tumbler. Pretending to notice nothing, I fumbled in my pocket for a cigarette.

"Excuse me, Sir," he said at last, without moving from the doorway. "I think there's a draught where you are. I do indeed, Sir."

"Draught? I don't feel any draught."

"O but there is;—if you're prone to colds or rheumatism or pneumonia you might take harm. If you please, Sir, I'd rather not be responsible."

Rising from my place I took my cocktail from his hands.

"You are not responsible. You are an idiot!"

My boldness in his presence was by this time, I confess, largely assumed. When I was again alone, a thousand mournful or sinister thoughts assailed me that not even strong drink could wholly disperse. The room held that quiet which only an oasis amid a desert of noise can possess. From outside sounded the subdued roar of traffic, and sometimes the building shook as a subway train plunged under it. From the outer bar came shriller voices, the sharp staccato of someone spitting and the sound of a match being struck. In my room, the gas-jets purred softly, tossing on their bilious light the fragments of lust.

It was almost an hour before I steeled myself to turn toward the glass which had so strangely impressed the waiter. My own face looked back at me as before, caricatured by the mists of the past into unpleasant prophesy of the future. But I was more encouraged by my boldness than depressed by the image. Deciding that all was right with the world—almost, and would be certainly after I had had another drink—I walked out to the bar and had my tumbler filled to the brim once more.

Now as I sat in my place, I frisked over my cocktails, pleasing myself with a thousand mental capers which in the light of modern psychology I ought to have "sublimated" into something poor and usual. I perceived in my solitary carouse a grandeur of mood, a Roman leisure, that no one who has not been similarly inspired can understand. With jocose familiarity I turned to the mirror a second time, prepared to give that fly-blown reflection a completely knowing leer.

The mirror was as clear as air. It reflected nothing.

I sprang up with a shout, hardly recovering myself to face the waiter, who came running as if he had been expecting just such a commotion. Curiously, his readiness threw me into a rage, and it was with a deal of choler that I repeated my order.

While he was fetching the drink, I reasoned with myself. Why should I, an initiate into all the mysteries of Asterisk

House; why should I, who have gazed on one of the great passions of the world; why should I, more sophisticated in spirit than Helogabalus in the flesh, be nonplussed by an empty mirror? And it came to me then that emptiness itself had destroyed me. To her creatures Nature has bequeathed her abhorrence of a vacuum. I recalled the evening in Asterisk House when the fear of nothingness had been substituted for the fear of enemies in the dark, and how much greater had been the second fear than the first. So when the waiter came back with my drink, I admonished him: "Hold fast to your name, for the forgetfulness of that is the final horror!"

"You mean, Sir?" he said, looking behind him toward help.

"I mean: hold fast to your identity, to your immortality."

"Yes, Sir. Thank you."

And handing me my tumbler, he retreated.

I was resolved not to look into the mirror again, though at the same time I knew that I was staying for no other purpose. The reasonable course would have been to take my drink into the bar and fraternize a while with Grover, who was now crowing and rioting over his cups. But I could not. Fear has a fascination of its own; I have known children to walk into dark cellars, terrify themselves there with all sorts of imaginings, and then fly screaming up the stairs to revel in the light. Fascinated in some such manner, first I carefully measured the direction and distance of escape, then deliberately looked into the mirror for the third time.

I was not frightened.

At a circular table sat a group, engaged in lively but to me silent conversation, whom I knew very well; and one youngster, not quite so familiar as the rest, whom I recognized as myself. He talked too much, indulged in outrageous emphases, and once, irritated by some remark, casually flipped his glass of water in the speaker's face. Yet he was very amiably indulged.

The six around the table were evidently about to break up their evening, though one of them was keeping time to music with his foot, as though he thought he and the melody would

go on forever. Watching him with the eyes of another decade, I felt the contrast too keenly, and turned from him to the Great Auk, who was much as he is today. He was laying down the law to a youth who led him on with exaggerated attentiveness, waiting for the moment to interpose something pert. I was half regretful and half glad that I could not overhear what they said.

With the appearance of a waiter at the table, another notion took possession of them, and it was evident that their evening was to be indefinitely prolonged. A stout youth rose from his chair as if to separate himself from the company, but he was pulled back by the coat-tails to his seat, into which he affably subsided.

"Now is my chance," I said to myself as their waiter returned with a demijohn of Orvieto. He uncorked it, wiped the mouth of the bottle with his napkin, and set it down.

With a fine disregard of my fist, I swung with all my force against the mirror, smashed through it and seized the bottle of wine. Chairs careened backward as the revelers sprang up at my intrusion, but I should have had no trouble in making away with my prize had it not been for that insensate youth who was I. Grasping my wrist with one hand and the bottle with the other, he half lifted me through the mirror. Since I could now hear as well as see, I was well nigh deafened with his oaths, but I outdid him. Backward and forward we sawed, howling obscenities at each other.

An ironic sense of the significance of this battle came to me, and I determined that I would prove my present self the better man. Holding on to my bottle, with my disengaged hand I broke his grip on my wrist; then, with a wrench that sent the little beast sprawling, and almost upset me in the opposite direction, I jerked the wine over to my side.

"Bring me a cork! Be quick!" I shouted at the waiter, who had run in at the sound of breaking glass. I could see the wine diminishing in furious evaporation. In a minute it would be gone. I thrust my thumb into the neck of the bottle to retard the process, but had lost half the vintage by the time the cork arrived.

"I had to break your mirror," I said to the waiter with dignity. "How much do I owe you?"

He named an exorbitant sum, but noting the happy relief with which he regarded the fragments, I made out my cheque for half the amount.

As I was leaving the bar with my bottle under my arm, Grover lurched toward me, chittering with excitement.

"What you got there? What you got there?"

"The wine of the past," I answered triumphantly, "the cure for all ills,—even death."

"O give me some, please give me some, give me, give me."

He clawed the air in the direction of my Orvieto.

"Sorry! it's not for you, old fellow," I said as I stepped into the night.

The cool wind struck my face, and brought with it a strangely familiar hissing sound. I looked in the direction whence it came, and at the end of the alley saw a naphtha light flaring away in the dark.

8.

I walked up the river for miles under the starlight until I reached the fence, on the top of which I balanced myself, taking great care not to break my bottle. After I had adjusted myself comfortably, I looked about me. Everything was just the same; and I was not too late. The final thaw of winter was at an end; through the night I heard freshets running down the slopes, the tinkle of water dripping from the boughs of trees; I smelt the sap and the pungence of wet earth as the south wind fanned my left cheek, exciting in me desires which were not carnal though their instrument was the body. All the river pasture stretched before me bathed in mist, and far off a few lights, each with its hazy aura, spoke for the city.

I uncorked the wine and drank. Much of it escaped me, drifting across my face in a sweet vapour. And what befell me then I hesitate to declare, lest I be thought wayward. Without haste or delay I was ravished throughout the four elements; my body shuddered to the roots, and about mid-

night I saw on the western horizon a wan sunrise, while from the scarcely budded trees sounded the full surf of summer foliage. In my heart, pride and panic struggled, for I became aware that whatever was happening, whatever should happen, was done through my agency, that the levers of the universe were under my hands;—that they had always been. A sense of endless repetition possessed me, as if I had placed two mirrors face to face and were looking into one of them. Anything which I conceived, my most random wish, would surely come to pass, and knowing that I was maddened with terror lest in spite of myself I might commit myself to a single idea. So I sat firmly in my place, unable to call to mind one conviction that I would dare practice upon the cosmos. Multitudes over the world who daily call on the gods for intervention, how little you know!

Someone laid his hand on my arm, and I turned to find Echo standing beside me. His eyes were tight shut and his features relaxed as if in sleep.

"Mr. Page," he murmured softly, "have you found him yet? I have wandered through all the halls of sleep and over this moorland for as long as I can remember, and I can not find him."

"Whom do you mean, Echo?"

"Wait, I'll whisper you his name." A puzzled expression came over his face, then a look of despair. "O my God! what is his name? what is it! I have sought so long that I have forgotten whom I am seeking!"

I gradually understood that Echo was not beside me, but merely one of his emanations, and stretching across the miles to Asterisk House, I saw him lying sound asleep in one of the tower rooms. But I was not concerned with him.

In the great hall Evoli was weaving a slow dance round and round a catafalque upon which reposed a clay image of the Star of the West evidently designed by Evoli to comfort her lonely heart. It was uncertainly lighted by tapers, and at first glance I was startled by the skilful reproduction of his face. Yet it was not identity, I soon discovered, but merely similarity. And the slight difference made this ob-

ject unbearable to me. The features were the same; yet since liveliness had been his countersign, the severe fixity of the mouth, the nostrils through which no breath moved, the hair which held the light without ever flashing it in a new direction, chilled me to the marrow. The effigy bore the same resemblance to the Star of the West as a frozen stream bears to the flowing water we have known in summer.

I looked closely at Evoli's face. Her eyes were focused on regions so remote that they reflected figures and shapes invisible even to me. Sometimes she would bend over and kiss the still mouth of the effigy; sometimes her tears would fall upon it, but after a while she ceased to regard it at all, and began singing:

"Come to thy house, O An, come to thy house. Thine enemy shall perish. O beautiful youth, come to thy house. I am the sister who loveth thee; go not far from me. Straightway come to thy house, for I can not see thee, and my heart weepeth for thee; my eyes follow thee about. Come to thy wife, O thou whose heart is still. Come to thy beloved, O Quiet Heart. As soon as I saw thee I cried out to thee, weeping in a loud voice which pierced the skies, and thou didst not hear my voice. I am thy sister from our mother's womb. My arms are raised to protect thee. I love thee, O my husband, O my brother, O my prince who cometh in peace to his home. Thy hair is like turquoise as thou comest from the fields of turquoise, thy body is of alabaster from the south and thy bones are of silver. The perfume of thy body is like the myrrh ever burning in the courts of Ra. O my beloved, come to thy house."

As someone again touched my arm, I withdrew myself from Asterisk House, expecting to see Echo beside me. But he was gone. In his place stood the Star of the West.

"Well, Mr. Page?"

He grinned and yawned at the same time, distorting his face so ludicrously that I burst into laughter.

"Well what?" said I.

"What do you think?"

"I don't dare think; I'm not used to this territory,—that is, I feel as if I weren't."

"Haven't you done anything? You can, you know. Anything."

"Please don't mention it." I became really alarmed.

"Well, why don't you do just a little thing. For example, don't you think it would be pleasant to overthrow all the democracies, exalt the mighty and throw down the humble and meek; give the nations despots to harry the people and bring back civilization?"

"Keep still," I shouted. "I'm madly tempted to meddle as it is. Why don't you do it yourself?"

He shrugged his shoulders, stretched, and yawned again.

"I don't do that sort of thing any more. The novelty's worn off. But what I meant in the first place was this: what do you think about me?"

"Well, I suppose you'll have to go back."

He picked up my wine bottle and drained the little that remained.

"So I must then," he answered after a long pause, "and do you know, the idea bores me extremely. I can not persuade Evoli to give it all up, and when she calls me, I'll have to go whether or not I want to. You see," his voice became apologetic, "I really should have no objections, except that we've done all this so often."

"Of course we have. And the trouble is that in this place *often* means future as well as past."

"No, no! It doesn't mean either. It just means for ever, always, NOW. Well, at any rate, it does not mean this instant, and if you'll excuse me. . . ." He was gone.

For a while as I sat there, I was strangely tempted to exercise my powers in unprecedented fashion, to shift the whole scheme of things and set it at a new angle. The thought was enough. A gust of snow blew against my face, the wind moaned from the north, and the clumps of birch trees cried out in fear. This would never do. I understood that beyond the master of power there is still the unknown master of the choice, and that the possession of the power in no way implied any freedom of will in the way it should be used. I lost my balance, and fell off my perch into a spring evening.

All about me the earth cajoled her creatures to their mating. The deer ran two by two along the edge of the meadow; pairs of birds, blown northward with the season, revolved wildly against the pale skies like small Paolos and Francescas swept around in the orbit of their passion. Fieldmice grandly consorted, their glow-worm eyes darting here and there. And ever the south wind rose, pushing against the great inertia. The stars, still visible in the occult dawn were going around the earth at a speed so terrific that their light trailed behind them. Yet in all this there was a solemn grace inconsistent with the idea of speed. This planet, too, was undulating, and I learned then that however smooth may seem the glide of a planet from afar, in reality it labours to the motion with much quaking and wrenching of rocky ribs, much heaving of its green flesh. Even so the ship which, to the watchers on shore, seems to be lifting and dipping effortlessly, actually strains with such creaks and groans as terrify the unhappy voyagers.

But no terror diverted the passengers on the earth-ship from their frolic. They leaped and flung themselves about; great deer bounded agilely over the tussocks, small conies capered on their hind legs, their long ears flapping. Yet every creature within himself was straining tormentedly, like the rocking ship, like the undulant world.

It was by this time apparent that I must go still farther, for the universe was circling around me; I had not yet been swept into its revolutions, but stood observing like one in the nucleus of a whirlwind. For had I been whirling with the rest, I should have seen no motion. I was ashamed.

Drawing a deep breath as if I were about to plunge into an unfathomable sea, I strode forward. In one blinding flash the revolutions ceased, and I stood clad in my flesh beneath the . . .

9.

. . . perpendicular cliffs of time.

For a moment my head whirled madly as I adjusted myself to the stable earth again. I reached back with my hands

to steady myself against the rock behind me, experiencing a singular pleasure at its smoothness and coolness, and even more at the secure feeling of home which took possession of me. For I was in familiar territory. Before me stretched the vistas of the Forest, closing their green recesses with shadow as the spring evening came on, and I was standing on an old wood-road which I remembered not with any great certainty but with the knowledge of having been there at least once before. Then as I saw that the cliff behind me was no cliff, but a wall of black onyx, I knew very well where I was. Moved by an exultation vast and spontaneous, I began repeating to myself: "Our Lady sings magnificat! Our Lady sings magnificat!" As if in contradiction to my ecstasy, there came a low sound of weeping from the thicket nearby. I walked toward it, and peering through the twilight and the trellis of leaves, saw the Star of the West crouched on a rock, his head on his arm, his shoulders heaving with sobs. Kneeling before him, her cup outstretched to him, was Evoli, and her face was lighted up with joy. As I neither dared go nearer them nor turn away, I watched over them until, aided by the thickening night, they grew dim and vanished.

When my cup is filled with your tears . . . then in my house you shall be called the Triumphant.

With the freshening south wind, I remembered much that evening, for the wine of the past was still in my veins, and also in the veins of the earth, turning south again toward spring after so long. The stars seemed not so old, nor I so young, as when, in my ignorance, I had first come to the Forest of the Asterisk. And for the loveless, tomorrow there should be love.

The sound of distant chanting drew me along the road toward the centre of the wood, but I walked slowly, regarding every new leaf with the particular attention one bestows on things which have suddenly become miraculous. It seemed that my ears could hear the engines of life throbbing as they pushed the tide of green upward from the roots of the world, and my eyes clearly discerned the ceaseless unfolding of pattern. This part of the forest had been known to me only in deepest night, but as I reached a large clearing, I knew

exactly where I was, for in the middle of the glade rose a great Altar, and under my hands were letters carved into the rock: HIC JACET ARTHURUS REX QUONDAM REXQUE FUTURUS. The chanting, this time increasing in volume rather than dying away, came from behind the Altar, which was vested from top to bottom in scarlet, as for the Pentecost. The six candles were already lighted.

Presently Echo, in the cassock of an acolyte, appeared from the left with a smoking thurible, and mounting the steps to the altar, swung the incense high in billowing spheres of adoration. Meanwhile, all the woods that bordered the glade began to fill with a host of dim witnesses. I could see shapes moving as stealthily as a whisper among the trees across the glade, and around me the dead leaves rustled with faint footfalls. For a long time they came from the uttermost parts of the wood until there must have been hundreds of them; then the arrivals were fewer and fewer; no more came, and in a hush of expectancy, the whole throng waited. I felt that many of them, particularly those opposite me, were not inclined favourably to whatever mystery was to be enacted. There was in the air the nervous poise of a conspiracy, the zero breath which precedes an assassination.

For a short interval the chanting paused, and when it was resumed, twelve priests came on with sombre pace from behind the altar. In their exact precision, their swift solemnity, they gave the effect of a zodiacal procession. Although the candles lighted the entire clearing so that I could even distinguish the symbols on the vestments, yet I could not see the faces of the priests; my eyes could not focus there. To this day, therefore, I am ignorant of their identity; and when I surmise, I tremble. The last priest to enter carried an object over which was hung a thin veil of gold samite. As this came between me and the candlelight, I saw that it was Evoli's cup.

He who bore the cup now mounted to the altar, while his companions ranged themselves around the steps, and he announced the chants, they responding antiphonally. The language was neither Latin nor Greek; more monosyllabic than those, it was, if harsher, somewhat more expressive

than either, and though it was unknown to me, so dramatic were the pauses, so unmistakable the sounds, that I was carried into recitals of events in which I, too, from the passion with which they were sung, seemed to be a participant. And always, through it all, I was conscious of that vast throng, waiting.

Now the twelfth priest placed the cup on the altar and knelt before it. Now he raised it toward the sky. Now he held it toward us, while Echo, reappearing with his censer, swung volumes of fragrance upward, which, breaking against the cup itself, were borne back with the breeze to mingle with the warm sweetness of the spring evening. With finality now, as if he had expended all his powers and could do no more, the priest replaced the cup on the altar and knelt before it. A bell tinkled far off through the forest like the note of a hermit thrush. The chanting ceased.

On each side of the glade appeared a single figure; on the right, a youth, and on the left, a girl. A long time they stood there, tall and immobile. Then, as the chanting began again very softly, they stirred like wakers from sleep; they lifted, turned, came to rest again. The voices rose, exhorting them to arouse themselves, to redeem the world from slumber. Obedient to the mounting eagerness of the singers, they circled in their places, they moved their arms upward as if they would swim into the air. Ever the tide of sound ascended, urging them on; it swept them faster, spun them higher, it rocked them to and fro as rising waves rock an anchored ship. Where the dancers were, seemed only two glimmering fountains, pulsing up from the ground, whirling, falling back, spreading into the air in bewildering rhythms. Long after the chanting had become unendurable, it swelled to yet greater volume; long after the dancers had blurred with speed, they moved yet faster, until storms of sound and motion pulsated across the soil on which I stood.

More appalling than a thunder-clap, absolute silence. The two halted abruptly, paused; then with a leap swung upward in wide arcs toward each other, and met in mid-air directly over the cup; met, and in that immense hush were united. A single leaf-shaped glory hung over the Altar.

When it seemed that the earth were about to crack open, and the hosts of all dead springs come forth again, the hostility of those who waited on the fringe of the glade rose in an onrush against the glory, and from the east an answering flare mounted steadily. The boughs tossed and moaned as if storm were coming on; the air crackled. My eyes were dazzled. The small leaves shriveled in the heat. Blindingly, the disc of the Star of the East plunged over the horizon and into the heart of the white flame above the altar. A mad glare shot out on all sides and high up toward the zenith; the white flames and the red engaged each other, wrestling over and under, twining out over the glade in writhing tentacles. The enemies on the other side of the wood began to murmur busily, calling on the Star of the East to give them back their kingdom. Onslaught after onslaught shattered the glory; fragments of it drifted off and expired in the arms of the wind, and always the red glow mounted as it devoured the radiance of a million years. The priests still knelt, the cup on the altar was still undefiled, but already the murmur of the hostile ones was rising to a shout of victory, as the white flame sank away to a single ember in the heart of the red.

A muted trumpet, echoing against the cliffs announced, and for the last time, the theme of Excalibur. As Joshua's trumpet threw down the walls of Jericho, so the sad, clear notes rent the solid rock asunder. The wall of onyx split apart and the whole night trembled to the crash of great doors not flung open but flung down bodily from their immemorial hinges. Out of all that confusion and downfall, strode a King in full armour straight through the clearing, pausing for obeisance neither to priest nor altar, as with predestined footfall he ascended to the cup. And from that uprose a hand, brandishing a sword. His breastplate glittered in the terrible light, but repulsing the garish reflection from the Star of the East, he stood bathed in his own radiance, as seizing the sword, he plunged it into the red horror. Then did the glory strike upward again and the scarlet flame dwindle and seemingly bleed away until it burned to a pale rose colour and flickered out. At the same

instant, there was the sound of a red-hot pebble dropping into Evoli's cup, where, with one sibilant protest, it expired.

The high priest lifted his head, the chanting became a loud chorus of triumph, and the King with his sword vanished from before my eyes. Over the altar, the glory grew to unbearable brilliance and separated into two parts. It was Evoli on the right now, and the Star of the West on the left, as they swung downward in long undeviating arcs. Then could I hold back no longer, but pressed forward joyfully to the altar itself. And from there, for the last time, I saw my friends face to face. They had not forgotten me even in the weariness of triumph, for as I turned from one to the other, I saw that they were waiting for me and had eyes for no other. It was the Star of the West who first caught my glance. As he smiled at me, he was still glowing from the heat of the awful passion; but I could not smile back at him again, so strangely was I moved to see unmistakably that out of his eyes Evoli's spirit regarded me. Quickly, then, I turned to Evoli herself, who, about to enter the forest, was pausing on the threshold for my sake. But as she looked toward me in farewell, I saw that it was not she, not she as I had thought to know her, but the Star of the West in her form.

Then a great darkness fell on Guernsey, until the Star of the West, in a marvelous manner, extended his dominion, and brought to that island a lamp which even now is lighting the midnight road for the last traveler.

JOSEPH WARREN BEACH

TWO POEMS

AFFINITIES

THERE is a Jew in whom I take delight
More than in any man uncircumcised,
For he is proud as one that is baptised
And gentle as a blushing acolyte.
Truth is the game he tracks both day and night,
Knowing how seldom truth may be surprised.
That is a man I'd trust with all I prized
Most dear,—my sons, my honor, and my right.

And when we turn together from the sham
And shoddy of the earth to heaven's gate,
There if the holy Peter think to slam
His portals in our faces with a damn,
We shall go up together and in state
Into the house of holy Abraham.

SALUTE

Press wormwood and all bitter weeds . . .
You hypocrites and pharisees . . .
And mix a drink as sour and wry
As your own barren hearts and creeds,

And I will take and drink it up
And gather strength with every drop,
And drink a health to all your tribe
And thank you for the bitter cup.

But pour the blood of figs and grapes
And sweeten with your canting lies . . .
I'll take the drink, and say a grace,
And chuck it in your dirty face!

HERBERT J. SELIGMANN

BLACK

1.

WE take him from his silver tissued paper
Unwilling to the daylight's garish glitter
And dangle him demanding he shall caper
Pathetic jumping jack, to make us titter

He is not asked, Sir, will it please you live
Will you consent to grace this mortal sphere
Will you make gift of what you have to give
Yourself, that is, to those already here?

Behold him dressed in bones and flesh and hair
Poor Jack, street clothes and hat and a vocation
Endowed with family, friends, and debonnair
Assent to living by predestination

Perhaps oblivious that his limbs are wood
His skull filled out with sweepings and for eyes
Translucencies of opal glass that should
Unlock to him the world for him to prize

Perhaps forgetting the machinery
By which he walks, draws breath, and sees and speaks
He translates the loud thump within to be
A heart-beat echoing a soul that seeks—

Seeks what? The moon that floods the evening sky
And paints with phosphorus the jagged streets?
Or single trembling bluish star on high
The focal point where soul with substance meets?

The city's evening stillness mocks his gaze
The moon unfurls its slender icy strands
Of chillness, that endure through nights and days
To pierce his inexpressive feet and hands

A jumping jack within the luminous city
Moved by the chill radiance of the moon
Hears the undying laugh that knows no pity
For those sped from their unborn peace too soon.

2.

Within his room, or silver tissue box,
The cover not yet closed against the day
Poor Jack sits down and carefully unlocks
The secrets from himself kept hid away

He finds a crumpled doll with battered face
And changeless smile, that he had flung aside;
A tarnished crystal that had caught his grace
Of selfless joy before it cracked of pride

A parchment gnawed by teeth of envious mice
Once graven with a deed that had been good
Until Jack called it good and asked a price
To pay his heart that it had understood

Two broken rings that had been fiery pledges
Forgotten and then trodden underfoot
The fragments bent and blunted at the edges
He found and breathed upon and cleansed of soot

The casket empty there remained a void
Like darkness when no moon is up above
No star is glittering and the lone unbuoyed
Self wanders seeking faith or hope or love

As empty as the frosty space that sweeps
From sun to sun unmeteored and unstarred

As lonely as a lonely man who weeps
That scornfully his prison has been barred

The knife of nothingness pressed at his flesh
And dusty earth clamoring to his dust
Jack's marionette limbs comically thresh
Within the dance that he must needs find just

As night grows dim he hides his toys away
His face composes in a wooden smile
And lies, prepared to welcome laughing day
With wooden gestures innocent of guile.

EDWIN MORGAN

THREE POEMS

SUNDAY RAIN

LILI, like chilly beetles let us crawl
Out from the sallow bud of our boudoir
And greyly look out at the long wan rain
That God in all his potency let fall
To ruin our one holiday again.

We'll toss no silver words at Fontainebleau
Or lie like warm fruit fallen from the tree,
Watching the swans like clear thoughts softly ride
Against the water-blossoms' tracery
The shaken subtle skies where we might hide
A moment in its peace, finding renewal so.

Lili, we'll lean upon the bitten window-sill
And watch the bourgeois splash to vaudeville,
Hearing dead Sundays thundering afar;
We'll bed at last like all the drear withdrawn
Hearing the moments spattering till dawn.

ANOTHER PORTRAIT

That I should go, no one of you believes,
In frills and velvet to insinuate
My ghetto-body in a Boucher fete,
Prettily dancing under twilit leaves.
Lebrun's Messires would laugh me my chagrin,
Enlaced with stately maidens after dark,
Timidly moving through the silver park,
The prey of cacophonous seraphin.
Unwanted at the wood-masques of Watteau,

Poudre de riz, a forlorn domino,
I'll steal for Cytherea, wan with stars,
Inconsequent among the grey guitars;
Or, spurned, I'll don the turban, crimson suit:
The little Nigger Boy with purple fruit.

EPITAPH FOR A GRASSHOPPER

I tried to hold my tongue and be
A credit to my friends and me;

I tried to keep what crumbs I found
And pile them neatly underground;

I tried to crawl and not to spring
Into the air, a fool awing;

I tried to do what's best for me
But died in my cacophony.

FLORENCE BECKER

TWO POEMS

ANTE BELLUM'S BELLY ACHE

WITH all the poignancy of this afternoon
On this very stoop
With the tenement kids shooting craps and yelling
"Momma, t'row me de key to de terlet,"
And the windows puffed with bedding,
Shaken by L trains;
AND the stinks—
Above all the stinks—

You advertise the rupture of your eggs
To the whole damn' stockyard—
You—poets, painters, musickers—
Newly hatched but far from downy.
You advertise each others' eggs as well
With huge letters, electric lights, and jazz bands.
Well—good for you.
This is that sort of world.

But when you say us fellers stink
We, born only yesterday, not in a stockyard
But on a jolly farm
Where papa loved mama
And the sun shone every day—
When you say we stink
Who aren't even dead—
You get my goat.
When you say Keats is dead
I laugh.
Listen, darlings:
There's lots of you deader than Keats.
Your feathers are nice on you
But mine suit me better.

I was born in '95
 And made up my mind befo' de wa'.
 I'm not going to make pi of it
 To feed you howling youngsters.

I wrote this hanging in the subway
 With my neighbor's back for desk
 To show you that old Ante B. is not so dead.
 I'd rather sit in my little garden writing sonnets,
 Tender, funny, not too loud.
 From now on, in fact,
 I will,
 God damn you.

APOLOGIA PRO VITA TUA

You who swim within my womb
 Knocking imperiously on the walls
 Of your narrow world—

I have heard your voice for many years
 Calling me from other occupations
 And from sloth
 Crying, "I want to BE."

How quaint of you, my dear—
 How primitive and unenlightened!
 Those who have been most vitally, most urgently
 complete
 Have left you Himalayas of documents
 On the vagueness and futility of Being.

If you are destined to develop
 That bothersome machinery behind your ears
 You too will wonder
 Why I listened to you.

I ask you to recall
 Before berating your mother
 How much you cried.

J. BROOKS ATKINSON

BLACKFLIES NOTWITHSTANDING

AS A MATTER of fact, we were driven from the woods by blackflies. I mention this mundane item immediately, in the interests of science and aesthetics, because presently I shall forget it. Already, eight weeks after our little mountain excursion, Pierre and I remember these blood-thirsty pests with infinite difficulty, as an irrelevant detail; and who am I to remind Pierre how roundly he cursed on that last, sultry, airless day, and how he stormed round in circles, brandishing fern leaves madly, as though there were no sweetness left in him? Shall I celebrate mountain grandeur by writing of pestiferous blackflies? Two entries in my notebook, recording the adventures of the last days on the Montalban Ridge, reiterate: "Blackflies simply intolerable." But the "selective memory," that mountaineer's alembic, has been steadily at work, boiling away the fumes of distressing details and forming a thick, sweet syrup of joys—of cold mornings, of swirling clouds, of foaming streams, of liquid-voiced thrushes and rare delights of the forests. Enough! Let us speak no more of blackflies. And may the devil's curse damn them to "belched fire and rolling smoke."

For the news of our brief excursion concerns nobler affairs. We trod wind-swept summits and camped in secluded log-shelters, quite alone with the bare peaks around us; and we heard spring bird melodies in remote mountain passes: the junco's full-throated paean of the summits, the rich voice of the olive-backed thrush, the plaintive notes of the white-throated sparrow, singing in vesper chorus, each in an individual strain. We heard them with the flush of the spring season, in the deep pass of the Great Gulf, in the barren cirque beyond, and in the dismal wasteland of Mt. Isolation. Meanwhile, we felt the ruggedness of wild country, up and down, rocky, spruce-grown uplands, with snowbanks still mocking the skies of June and July.

At night cold winds from the summits kept our campfires snapping briskly, and kept the black branches of the spruce trees bowing mysteriously in the starlight. All this resembled nothing else with which we were familiar. It was mountain country; it paid no tribute to the city.

Having come to the woods—as always—with a sober determination to blend with their verdant pattern, to accept their natural standards, we began to feel absurdly at home. As soon as the stage set us down with our bulky equipment in Pinkham Notch, we, who are city-bred, and who had been regarding this new excursion as an adventure, found ourselves relaxed in the company of shaggy spruce trees and hermit thrushes. We did not delay. Stuffing our hats and ties away and lighting our pipes, we shouldered our packs, gingerly, and walked slowly up the trail towards the wild amphitheatre of Tuckerman Ravine. Before we had gone a half mile to the river-crossing at Crystal Cascade we had dropped the burden of the city completely. Was it arrogant to assume that perhaps we, and all humans, belonged more to the woods than to the city: that our journey away from the house was towards home? But scrambling up a steep trail with thirty-five pounds on our backs left no time for reverie and no energy for luxurious thinking. We were saturated in the reality surrounding us. Even when we rested beside the trail we were straining our ears for bird voices or perchance following, with the binoculars, some thrush's silent movements in the twilight of a damp spruce thicket; and the end of the trail, two miles beyond and two thousand feet above, was too remote for our range of perception. At last we came to the Hermit Lake log shelter at the mouth of Tuckerman Ravine, Lion Head rising abruptly above us as a token of aspiration. Until half-past seven we were busy cooking, eating, washing dishes and laying out our bedding. Then, after heaping the logs on generously, we sat smoking by the fire until night fell black. A cold wind from the summits swept the fire into Vulcan fury; the sparks flew grandly above our heads. Somewhere up the ridge an olive-backed thrush sang steadily, in notes less mellow than the hermit's, but fuller, wilder, more expressive

of the mountain heights. Listening, we were transmogrified, at rest in the present moment; our immortality, as Thoreau boasted of his, had begun already.

2.

Although we had no definite plans for our journey, thoughts of the Great Gulf had been lurking in our minds. Several years previously we had camped in that exhilarating ravine beside the West Branch until we were filled with impressions. And so poignantly had they lingered that we frequently talked of returning there to refresh them at the source. Not that we wanted to explore this wild torrent pathway with its rim of summits: our purpose was much less tangible. We wanted merely to *be* there again, to try ourselves by its standard, to claim shelter within its steep boundaries. What were the gods of so precipitous a ravine? Might we not be present at their council?

By nine o'clock the next morning we were accordingly on the trail again while the olive-backed thrushes, the veeries, juncos, blackpoll and myrtle warblers were celebrating the beauties of sunshine and mountains about which humans remain inarticulate. Our course lay through Tuckerman Ravine, across the Alpine Garden just under the tip of Mount Washington, and down fast and steeply into the Great Gulf. But as we emerged above Hermit Lake the huge snowbank on the headwall appeared, as we had been warned, to be quite impassable. All along the trail ice and snow lay hard and granulated under the trees and the alders and birches up here were not yet in leaf. Within an hour we had thus left June behind, and in the space of a mile we had chased the season back almost three months; we saw that we had come to a new world over which new circumstances and new seasons prevailed. When at length we came to the foot of the headwall, its vast expanse of snow, perhaps fifteen feet deep, lying at a steep angle hundreds of feet above, effectively cut off further progress in that direction. It was covered with stratifications where snowslides had rushed to the valley. Like a huge map of North

America it swelled over the high wall, the black masses of protruding ledges representing the bare islands of the Arctic Circle. We dared not risk starting a fresh slide by pushing on into the snowbank. With the binoculars we discovered a possible way up the retaining wall to the south, a clear pass save for one doubtful transverse ledge near the top. Might we climb through a tiny ridge in that final battlement? It was too far away for us to be certain. But we left the trail, crossed a stream, pushed through an alder growth and came to the foot of the barrier. Far above us the tiny rift through which we hoped to climb appeared as a slight notch in the contour line.

If you regard such rock formations as a succession of details, as a series of problems in rock climbing, you miss the true meaning entirely. When we had twisted through the jumble of huge boulders to the rock chute up which we hoped to climb, we saw for the first time an ominous swelling that prevented a view to the top. It was at once stimulating and enigmatic. But as we rested at the bottom, a little anxious about our next course, a white-throated sparrow sang some hundreds of feet above us in a bushy growth to the left. "Old Sam Peabody, Peabody, Peabody," he sang, modulating his notes towards the end of the song, cool, serene, yet full of some unformed emotion. Yes, this was the motif for such a region; he expressed what we felt ourselves. Thus all the wild nooks in the mountain speak in their own tone, sweet or awesome as the case may be—tones whose intimations we may slowly learn to understand. Sometimes on warm mornings late in February I hear the white-throat try out his calando in a garden near New York where he spends the frozen winter months in a tiny jungle of grasses and reeds. The song is uncertain then, deliberate rather than inspired; but I know it will speak richly in the spring. Was not this solitary bird on the ridge an augury? Choosing to consider him as such we started cautiously up the rock chute and devoted our attention to the details of each footstep.

After nearly two hours of laborious climbing we came to the little rift between two high overhanging ledges. Here

was the chief uncertainty. As we had feared, the transverse ledge was too high, too nearly vertical and smooth to be climbed. Pierre experimented unsuccessfully on the left. I climbed down, around and up on the right to one sloping, contributory surface where I thought I could wriggle up and sideways. Apparently there were no hand or footholds; but one seldom finds them in advance. Such aids to climbing are to be felt by imploring hands and feet rather than seen. Trusting to good fortune I strapped my pack tightly, lay flat on the rock, moistened the palms of my hands, pressed them hard against the surface, and then I wriggled to the left. For an instant, after leaving the last foothold, with nothing but friction to keep me from tumbling off, I burst into perspiration. Visual images of the situation swept through my mind like a kaleidoscope. "Was it too late to go back?" I asked myself, but instinctively I squirmed on. Presently I had a fingerhold, soon I found a place to put one foot, then a handhold; and at last I was where I could rest my pack and light my pipe, the danger over for the moment. Should I tell Pierre the full details? It seemed wiser not to. He was out of sight below me, but I shouted directions and after a while one hand and his head came into view. He was searching for handholds. "What do you hold on to now?" he inquired earnestly. "Nothing," I said casually, "Just lie flat and wiggle over." With a little grin of excitement he let go, looked perplexed for a moment; and then, while we both laughed with relief, he drew up beside me. Ten feet above we found a pocket where we could remove our packs, get shelter from the blustering wind and in security look down to the swimming floor of the ravine. The white-throated sparrow continued singing, now far below us, as we munched chocolate, smoked, and talked excitedly. We clambered to the top without further inconvenience.

3.

However, I would not write of details—especially of details in no way remarkable to experienced mountaineers. I wish rather to write of ourselves under the spell of the

summits, invigorated and re-established by contact with the mountains. For although we idled away most of our time in the Great Gulf, smoking unconscionable quantities of tobacco, and gazing interminably across the fireplace, we squeezed every moment dry. "The Great Gulf, lying between Mt. Washington and the northern peaks, is nearly 2000 feet deep and about five miles in length," says the informative Appalachian Mountain Club guidebook. "It was formed by erosion beneath a local glacier and is, therefore, in itself an interesting commentary on the age of the mountains rising above it. The West Branch rises a short distance below the summit of Mt. Washington, rushes noisily down the length of the Gulf and enters the Peabody River. In a wild and picturesque region at the head of the Gulf lies Spaulding Lake, a tiny sheet of water, little more than a mile from Mt. Washington, but over 2000 feet below the summit." Furthermore, this narrow gully, winding like a broad U between steep ridges, is heavily forested with virgin spruce trees, from three hundred to three hundred and fifty years in age. In the course of the summer many trampers follow the difficult trail that twists beside, and sometimes into, the river; and finally they clamber up the bare rock wall to the top of Mt. Washington. Some of them camp for the night at the log shelter in the shadow of Mt. Adams: Chandler Ridge, Washington, Clay, Jefferson and Adams enclose them securely. Amid those summits they must be, even unwittingly, not merely physical climbers but better men.

For the rest of the afternoon, from 12.30 until 6.30 to be precise, we made our way slowly over the black, weathered rocks of the Alpine Garden, over the barren Chandler Ridge; and then, with the northern peaks beyond, and the Great Gulf at our feet, we scrambled down the precipitous trail to the floor of the deep chasm, resting our nerves frequently on the way. Directly we crossed Chandler Ridge I think the Gulf began to cast its spell upon us. We stopped for generous pauses. Sheltered by a clump of stunted spruces above the final parapet, we boiled a kettle of soup, brewed tea and smoked for a time after lunch. Again we

lingered in one spot to watch a blackpoll warbler who was "zeeing" drily in the stiff northwestern wind. But all the while the Great Gulf was seeping into our consciousness; our conversation became more than usually innocuous. On the edge, just before the final descent, we sat free of our packs and studied the full length of the Gulf through the binoculars—the close web of trees, the winding pass of the West Branch, the grand, dizzy leaps of mountain slope to Adams and Jefferson summits, the gulches laid bare by landslides, the banks of snow in deep ravines, the white of foaming water at high altitudes, the clouds swimming majestically overhead. Reclining in a secure place on the rim of the Gulf, we were not vainglorious. Already we were adjusting ourselves to a new ratio of forces in which our little dab of humanity had no perceptible significance. Supposing we had shaken our fists at it. Supposing in the ecstasy of defiance we had jumped off into it, matching our active strength against its passive resistance. Which would succumb? Well, we found submission to be the wiser course for the moment.

In fact, I do not remember that we were ever particularly effervescent all the time we camped in the Great Gulf, on the bank of the icy West Branch river. I do not mean that we did not enjoy it. On the contrary, we enjoyed it so much that the memories still lie warm and glowing in our minds. But just as the penitent and humble subside into whispers and long silences when they are at worship in the cathedral, giving themselves as freely as they can to their Master, and rejoicing in their submission, so we, too, felt the presence of a deity in whom we believed, a master of beauties and mysteries, omnipotent and sublime, quite beyond our comprehension—perhaps the same god we had known always in his less vivid revelations. Of his mercy, however, we were less reassured than usual. No doubt he was tender and compassionate. But looking at the ruins, the fallen trees, the jagged cliffs, we could not be certain. Whatever his qualities the sweeping proportions of the Great Gulf bore witness to his variety, and most of all to his timelessness. Was our presence even perceptible to him? We did not

know. Indeed, we knew only that he drenched us with himself; and the heights to which we were exalted stood out majestically, granite-tipped, before our eyes.

4.

But what did we do? In a word, we lived. Without ever exerting ourselves, without rushing at the Great Gulf madly like the restless, curiosity-bitten tourist, we made complete use of its equipment. After breakfast on our first day we selected a standing dead spruce, one hundred yards from camp; and I—(I, you see, am the author of this article)—I chopped it down myself. It leaned naturally towards Mt. Adams, but if it dropped in the opposite direction it would then be more convenient for our purpose. When it obeyed its natural impulse, rather than the skillful direction of my chopping, and fell slowly toward Mt. Adams into a tangle of tough, thick spruces, I remember vaguely some ribald comments made at the time by the intolerant Pierre. Nothing of importance here, however. We chopped the tree into ten foot lengths, split the logs, worked up the dry branches into firewood, and warmed ourselves at it again during the chill of the silent evening. Each day we found a new tree. At our meals we lingered over the cooking, eating and washing. Sometimes after luncheon we sat smoking in camp. At other times we sat for long Indian-hours on a huge boulder in the midst of the camp-site from which all the surrounding mountain ridges were visible. Once we started to read aloud essays by Montaigne, a miniature copy of which we had imported; but, although we tried several, they all seemed too pretentious. This was no time for thoughts; we had none, and wanted none from other sources. It was the time for dreaming, for reveries, for mystical impressions, for sun-worship and star-gazing—listening to “the music of the spheres and the creaking of the earth’s axle.” We gladly abandoned ourselves to such nebulous enterprises.

Coming in June we had hoped to hear the birds in the full glory of their nesting-season. All day we kept our ears

alert for bird notes in the surrounding forest, and we gave chase through the spruce thickets at the first sign of winged life. Occasionally, armed with the binoculars, we set out down the trail, watching and listening patiently, remaining silent in one spot for a protracted interval; or we scrambled off the trail to an open amphitheatre in the midst of the peaks and forest to sit on a fallen log, straining every sense, waiting. Did you ever hunt birds in a virgin spruce forest where the treetops are thick and umbrageous? It is a maddening quest. In the first place, the birds in evergreen woods are less numerous than in pastures and at roadsides, and less conspicuous as well. In the second place the light is bad and the visibility ruined by spruce branches. But the birds who live there, few and shy though they may be, always seem to me the purest birds of all, the most entrancing, the least gregarious—the most luminous expressions of natural beauty. In the woods near camp we found magnolia, Blackburnian and myrtle warblers, golden-crowned and ruby-crowned kinglets, white-breasted nuthatches, winter wrens, white-throated sparrows and one northern chickadee. In the evening came the thrush chorus, full and tranquil, the quintessence of the forest. Down the trail a quarter of a mile was an open space, the ruin of some windstorm, with a clear view of Chandler Ridge, a few dead, sharply-etched spruces still poking above the slash in that direction. Here we repaired in the evening to hear the olive-backed thrushes singing antiphonal music, answering one another long distances apart, in tones incredibly pure.

To compare bird music with symphonic music is quite absurd, for the one is wild and the other human; they have nothing in common whatsoever. Neither one can even approximate the tones, the intervals or the variety of the other. Certainly no written score could carry the ethereal melody of a thrush chorus when the quiet of the evening begins to spread through the forest. In the barren, snow-patched cirque of the Great Gulf some days later we heard one gray-cheeked thrush singing quite by himself as we toiled slowly up the sixty-five per cent. grade of the headwall to Mt. Washington. At Camp Isolation we heard many thrushes

and white-throats singing simultaneously. In other places we found rare and beautiful birds such as one sees only by chance. But for sheer transfiguring beauty of expression there was nothing to rival the olive-backed thrushes in the Great Gulf. Although we examined every treetop and exposed branch carefully, and crept cautiously in the directions from which individual voices came, we were never fortunate enough to catch one in the act of singing. Perhaps that mysteriousness enhanced the beauty of these vespers, and discovered in them the true timbre of the Great Gulf. Describing the song of the olive-backed thrush Bicknell writes: "The first note is loudest and most liquid, after which the melody becomes rapidly fainter, seeming to dissolve upon the ear like the spent vibrations of a stringed instrument." The liquid note represents the West Branch river; the "spent vibrations," are they not the wind in the spruce trees? But the song is also calm and meditative, a limpid tone, with range and relaxed modulation. In the twilight while the sun still warmed the bleak tip of Mt. Adams, the voice of the Great Gulf came thus reassuringly from the forest.

When the wind died during the next few days, the black-flies settled down upon us with maddening persistence. They bit us between the fingers, behind the ears and in rings around the neck where our shirt collars provided indifferent protection. While we cursed them and sat in the pungent smoke of smudge fires until we smelled to heaven, the olive-backed thrushes kept on singing as serenely as though there were no pests, no vexations of any kind, in the whole world. Returning home after several days of camping in Tuckerman Ravine, Thoreau once noted that "the wood thrush sings differently up there." Now that even the poorest of us is a scientist, we know Thoreau's fundamental error: he had never distinguished between the wood thrush of Walden and the olive-backed of the White Mountains. Nevertheless, I feel sure that as usual he was right in spirit even though he was wrong in fact. For bird songs are not to be separated from their habitat: they speak for their native mountains and valleys. Each one is a true voice of the Great Spirit.

MAURICE LESEMAN

FOUR POEMS

HILL-TOP

WE were up on the hill.

The road wound somewhere below in the dark and the hush.
The cars went by on the road, and we'd see soft spurts of
light and we'd hear the rush

When they rounded the turn,
Then once more all would be still.

It was summer, a summer night. We sat on the stone
Of the monument, the gray stone cross that now stands over,
Up over the pinyon bushes and the hill,
Lifting up there sheer and alone,
Up over the stream, and the valley, and the silent town.

We sat on the stone and watched the lights of the day
Go drifting to gray,
And the yellow-gray desert drifting to brown;
Far off we saw the first lone lamps being lighted in Santa Fe.
We watched the long low purple streamers of clouds fly
Dim from the sunset mesas and leave them blue,
Then leave them utterly dark—dark monoliths on the sky.

We sat there together, the black haired girl and I,
We watched the gray specks of the moths go dancing over,
We turned to each other now and again with a sudden laugh
or a short sigh,
It was summer, deep summer night, and the town glimmered
far below in the hush.

We listened together:
There was a slow sound of singing, it came on the wind,
it wandered up the hill with the keen evening rush
Of the wind. Why, for a moment there was music all 'round
us in the bush!

We laughed together on the hill,
She laughed while her timid lips came near me—oh, the shy
Wild strangeness of her body, the long, silver poplar thrill
Of her body, in the first cool crush . . .

We two together on the stone,
With the night growing large around us, and larger still
In the high dark, on the cool hill.

I WONDER STILL

I wonder still, I cannot understand
How such a thing can be: that I should come
Pent-up and aching to your breasts' cool kindness,
Grow strange with you and dumb,
Seek out your lips, and then as if a flame were fanned
Softly between them, flow with a dark fire;
So to consume with you at last beyond desire;

And then—this thing I cannot understand—
That suddenly the earth from everywhere
Should slowly breathe as if for the first time
And I be all aware,
Body and soul unsheathed of a great blindness,
And you be near as if the morning land
Were lying in my arm—calm in my arm,
As if all grassy hills from east and west
Were intimately breathing into our rest,
Were rushing in upon us quiet and warm.

THESE TRANSIENTS

And I must work on always without ending.
The room will turn to gray behind my head
And in the dawn I shall be doubtful if I have said
One word my own, one word not somehow faltering
From the sharp, essential thing.
I know that all my life now I'll be spending

My strength like this—I'll be writing on toward age
Aghast at what is dying on the page.

I never knew before there was no ending . . .
And this is our strange stand, as on a lonely hill:
That for some years our better songs may be sung
By a few throats, silently. That, come what will,
These must diminish, and our words grow stark
And strange with time. That whatever beauty has clung
Like phosphorus upon them will be worn dark.
That we, moreover, being dead shall never know
What answers they have wrung.
That we, now living, look for no immortality
Save luminous words worn dark—a soundless cipher
Our final incarnation; a scholar's transcript
Our spurious resurrection.

We shall be flung
Into a void. Our passion will drift forever
Voiceless in a forgotten tongue.

All this for spring, and prairie flowers in bloom,
And earth slow weaving on her living loom;
Marsh marigold, wild columbine, birch and beech
And willows like low rain, and orchards like white clouds
 careering;
And all these transients wakening and uprearing
Into wild speech.

• SON AND MOTHER

In the open door his gray eyes glance aside.
He droops at table, running his hand through his hair.
It angers him that her own eyes never can hide
Or harden themselves. He finds them always there,
Always open upon him—soft and wide,
Brimming like soft full moons. He does not care,
Yet leaving the house, or coming at dawn from a dance,
It is still a troublesome thing, though a somewhat dim
Mystery now, to meet as if by chance
Her soft wide-open eyes enveloping him.

JENNINGS TOFEL

ESSAYS IN INTIMACY

1.

I CANNOT forever see things in a detached way. Perhaps mine is an inferior mind. There is no distance between me and the things I behold. The world and its objects and phenomena find their root and substance in me. I am attracted by those things only that have qualities in common with me. Curious, what a heap of things I do not see at all, as if I studied to avoid them. But I accept my mind, such as it is. Perhaps that is not wise, nor good. I will not go against the grain of my mind, believing that what is—is. What I cannot change, I can either disregard or accept. If I changed my inclinations or characteristics of thought, I should upset my intrinsic self or soul. Then what would remain to me? The rest is not worth while. I should be stalking among the debris of a vessel. I should be living a lie. And accepting my mind, I cannot deny any part of it. Much is submerged in the deep below my consciousness, that never is known to me. But if it is not palpable to me, it belongs with the heap of other strange things that lie outside of me. Don't I strain my eye and ear every living minute, for some new beauty hitherto unperceived? Don't I roam and ramble in the hills, in the woods, on the pavements of the streets for some new revelation of truth! But the longing that goads me on, and the thing I discover—it is my mind, my own. You lash out a whip,—that is longing. The peculiarities of your sensibilities,—that is the object you discover. I go out into the street each time to test a new sentence of a story I heard before I was born. The painter sets up an inanimate strip of linen. He hopes to give it life, detached and all its own. But through the brush of red sable flows the paint and likewise his virtues and habits of living. The painter attempts an attitude. Or perhaps he trusts

that the forms of the hills or the nude do not live in him and that he has surprised them where he found them. No, they went out to seek him. They met where they did or the hills would have come to meet him. The shadow, after it has stretched to its utmost, where does it finally come to repose? But I do not here want to strike the attitude of that painter. I see, and I say: I see; hearing, I say; I hear. For when I do say: hearing or seeing, who is it that hears or sees? Vain is not the word to reproach me with. For I am not vain. My approach is humble and not loud. I wish to efface my self by acclaiming self. I want to say: You also are I. Even if I could lay down a formula of life, and you wished to follow, my trust is that your feet would stray. Therefore, whatever I find is my own. But if it is mine, will I not share it with whoever comes? For if he comes, he has surely need; and I would not deny a man his needs. I have seen that for lack of the right soil trees are thin and dry in the hills and die rapidly.

2.

Last night the moon hung like a crystal over the white lake in the hills. The moon behind still trees. Tonight there is another moon, of misty gold lifting above the dark river. I listen to the silence which is another silence. I see two moons, a crystal moon and a golden moon. Yesterday and today stand before my eyes, side by side. Yesterday's voices I hear today, with no difficulty. Yesterday's sights I see today, without difficulty—side by side with today's, one within the other. My mind contains yesterday's solitude, and today's. Only yesterday's laughter has a harder ring today. It is a mockery. Tomorrow's happiness is not a joy today. It is an irritation. I feel anxiety lest I exhaust it today. Tomorrow's joy—it will lie in my arms, it will breathe into my face, it will kiss my teeth. The moon will be a crimson moon—which I shall also remember. Tomorrow night I will say to my consciousness: rest, shut your sad eyes, sleep, it is only the moon in the far heavens, not she.

But I will know better. Even tonight by the insistence of the mind, she is here, so immediate, so touchable. I should leave tomorrow's joys alone. O! but tomorrow is already here. Where else should it be? Where else will it bide the while if not here, with me? Tomorrow is already here—the crimson moon as well as the crystal moon, as well as the misty golden moon. Why does not the morrow come down on me as a storm? But the morrows take long in coming, and when they have come, they shout it abroad, they make a big noise. Expectantly I wait. My quick mind is impatient. Tomorrow is coming, tomorrow is coming, coming, coming! You run, and when you have come near, you walk, and then you sit silently and still. Is my mind a toy I play with? It is not a toy. No, I am a toy. And something is toying with me. Here I am with pen in hand seeking to steady myself, seeking to discover who it is that is taking his pleasure with me. It will be in vain. The brilliant moon over the still lake in the hills lives in me. It is vain to hope it will pass out of my consciousness. But yesterday's joys I can well bear. Tomorrow's joys are another thing. I wash my hands in cold water. I bathe my face, my head.

3.

I love a young woman, and she loves me. Which is nothing strange,—all men love women, and women men. But it is not so simple. My love is sometimes a madness. That is the crest of the wave, the high moments. Sometimes I am indifferent. Of course, at times I am dull, thick, and impenetrable to anything. I began by seeing her faults. She is perfect now, as no one has ever been perfect. Now, I am not become blind and hope I am just as sensitive, but I am not irritated by those, what will I call them, failings. They are part of her—and I accept her. For all those characteristics have become to me her virtues by which I know her and am attracted to her. I am puzzled. She is my true love, toward whom I strain my sight at this distance. I see her in all her attitudes, and they are magnificent. Is it merely that my eyes have attained to a new sense of perfection? I do not measure her up to an ideal of woman. I measure all women

up to her, and I must say they do not have her poise, her human grasp, such intense silence, such beautiful eyes, such finely made thighs, beside many other things. Sometimes she moves in me. Really I think I contain her, as I contain my mind, and my mind in turn contains the world. And she moves in me complete, not projected in space, but in me. When I sleep with her I would also contain her, I embrace her and would put her bodily into me. Of course that is not possible, and my passion ends in torment, in incompleteness. The next best thing I can do is to melt in her, to lose myself, to surrender myself to the power which is she or rather which is we two. One eternity I float in forgetfulness, the world that we set down as below the level of the mind. We take a trip into the paradise of Nirvana. And when she leaves me to go to her duties, and I my own way, I suffer so much pain as if you would cut off my arm. Why should we ever separate! Why indeed do I not cut off my arm after it has done some creditable act? My arm must be forever with me. And the worth of an arm is not alone its use. But she, of course out of necessity, goes away from me. And I am resigned: suppose she died. Necessity has just so much of a grip as death itself. But that is not helping me. I walk out into the streets, roam about in the park, look on at a dance. She is not there. They are all clever, those young women, some pretty, others graceful. But who has such attributes as my beloved? Who can make me happy and yearning at once? Who is so human and so inexplicable as my beloved? None. Suddenly I am aware of what I want. I want to see her with my eyes, the eyes of my face. Through space I see into myself—her, my own dearest, my bride. I put out my hands. O, my hands are bad creditors. They rage, when they meet empty air. While she, as she pours water into the flower pots on her window, sings and cries. And I am proud, or I should say that I also cry, though men do not cry so lightly. But when I am indifferent to her, God help me! then I am not even unhappy.

Of course my beloved is wiser than I. But I know that we could not grow apart by keeping together in the flesh. I do not need to resort to absences in order to strengthen my attachment. If love needs distance, is not the distance between

us forever great, if the mere flesh and bones are intervening? And our love, how will that suffer if I know her thighs and breasts? What will I ever know better than the fingers of my right hand? But still with all her wisdom, watering her flowers, she sings to me. And I with all my convictions—She has caused me to think more insistently on abstract form than any other body, because no form has ever been so positive to me and that I wanted to hold forever and understand. There is nothing but abstract form, I conclude, and the desire may be complete but the fulfillment never. And so also my love for her may be complete, but the fulfillment never. And I cry against the mind that stands between me and my love and does not permit of perfect fulfillment. But my mind retorts and says: "Where would she be now if not for me, your mind: Am I not the vessel that contains her for you, am I not the mirror in which she is reflected for you?" What can I do? Abstract form is the only life we know. Abstract form is the tragedy we endure. Each day is a chapter of a tragic work—our life—if we live it—if not, God help us!

Now, at this late hour she must be in her white bed. I will put away my mind from me and join her, and we will walk in our dreams together.

DAVID ROSENTHAL

FOUR POEMS

SILENCE

WHY then, Silence,
Since in other days
You came
As cool mint,
As moss,
As unguent
Against brambles of sound
Or stood
A scarecrow
Guarding my sheaves of peace,
Do you now come
Etching me
With your needled tattoo
Coating me
With your tar and feathers
Binding me
With your mummy's cloth?

RIVERCRAFT

Rivercraft of tugfat beetles,
Bargeclumsy bugs,
And yachtkeen dragonflies
Ply the green meadow swells
When galleyslaves of wind
Churn the tiding grasses
With a quinquere of oars.

TO FRIEDA

Windwaywardly
Windgipsily
Your laughter passes
And stirs in me
Green wave on wave of grasses
That dance about
In tidal rout
And tiptoe tipsily
Long after
Your laughter
Wends out
Windwaywardly
Windgipsily.

BIRCH LOGS

Earth that cradled you
In its arms,
Rocked not the eagle
Of your seed's longing;
Days that dandled you
On their knees,
Fondled not the tiger
Of your seed's desiring.

Your seed slaked not itself
On earth's mineral bitterness
Or haggled with pennywise worms
Or wore as keepsake
The spittled flattery of slugs,
Merely to have you grow
Wrist-slenderly.
Nor did your seed
Argue frothmouthed
With dogmatic rocks

Over boundary lines
And liens and priorities
Or bleed at the usuries of clay,
Merely to have you grow
Good-daughterly
To twiddle needled sunlight
And sew bibs for grass

Here on this hearth
Is how your seed dreamed you,
Here in this flame
Is the accouchement
Of your seed's desiring:
Eagles,
Climbing tall masts of sunlight;
Tigers, waveundulant
In clearings turbulent with sun.

THOMAS CRAVEN

ON LIVING WITH PICTURES

AMONG the many misapprehensions attached to the art of painting, there is one which seems completely to have escaped the critical intelligence. I mean the notion accepted to-day by the majority of artists as well as the public that pictures are made to be lived with, that the beauty of painting is essentially narcotic and conducive to domestic repose. In designing his pictures, the contemporary artist is governed by the whims of his patrons—in America mostly women who look upon pictures as agreeable ornamentation and select them, as they select flowers and chintzes; and the critics, blind to the social and architectural values of art, prattle about textures, surfaces, and soothing color combinations—superficial qualities which cannot possibly disturb the monotony of one's quotidian existence. But it is not asked of the other arts that they should be lived with, not of music, the theatre, literature, and dancing, not even of architecture, the most intimate of all. Take music, for instance. In its highest and most complex forms, the opera and the symphony, the nature of the medium and the expenses of production make it of necessity a public affair to be enjoyed occasionally. And gone is that obnoxious implement of American culture, the upright piano! No longer is the atmosphere of the home rendered intolerable by the metallic airs of the gifted daughter and the spineless son! The radio has killed the amateur performer and converted America into one vast concert hall. Music has become a national industry, and the modern family, after its nightly debauch of movies, gathers round the festive horn for an hour or two of exaltation. But it is not an art to be lived with, and thanks to science, may now be had whenever the soul cries out for nourishment.

I need not dwell on the physical equipment restricting the drama, like the symphony, to public performances. As

to dancing, if it is ever an art, as the cults and Russians would persuade us, it is essentially a spectacle for the stage with scenic and pictorial accompaniments. And literature? Pedagogues and Sydney Lees have dinned Shakespeare into our ears since we were children; they have flogged us into reading, re-reading, and memorizing the immortal stuff; they have spouted the divine philosophy from one year's end to another, and have pushed to such a length the idea of making the bard a part of our daily lives that our appreciative faculties have been numbed forever. And there is Byron's "Apostrophe to the Ocean." For all I know it may be the noblest sort of poetry—even Swinburne approved of it—but I cannot tell. Excessive familiarity has turned it into rhetoric for rustic elocutionists. Once I believed that Henley's "Invictus" was a brave creed, but it has gone the way of Fitzgerald's "Rubaiyat." How would you like to live with the novel? "The Brothers Karamazov" or "Lord Jim"? One of the greatest virtues of the printed book is that it can be closed, put on the shelf, and forgotten, and ninety percent of the time, the function of a library is purely decorative. The æsthetic young man who carries a book with him wherever he goes is merely striving to adorn his personality and his exhibitionism is pardonable.

One cannot, of course, live without architecture, but only the blind can live with really beautiful architecture. One's domestic surroundings should be comfortable and in good taste, though neither condition is indispensable to one's highest development. You will have observed that painters, of all people, seem to prefer to work in a sordid atmosphere. Beautiful buildings are too disquieting to be endured for any length of time. No one, not even a fanatic, could spend more than a small fraction of his life in a Gothic cathedral; and old Rodin who swooned at the sight of Chartres and Rheims dwelt in a house that was as barren as a tomb. The famous palaces of Europe have never been occupied by men and women who lived according to human standards but by pathetic, insensate actors, or lascivious royalty dead to every appearance of beauty. And the best of American skyscrapers affords little beauty to the man in the street and

less to the hapless clerks who pass their days in its cement cubicles. We have the amusing experiment of the restless American who rents or buys a foreign villa and engages to pattern his life after his fantastic notions of the lords of the Renaissance. Painfully conscious of his expatriation, and unable to adapt himself to routine indolence, he collects old chests and spurious gimcracks, drinks tea with the more accomplished English snobs, and finally drifts home again, miserable and defeated, to rail against apartment houses and the unmitigated vulgarity of the New World. And we have the millionaire voluptuary who pretends to take his ease in his baroque mansion while actually coveting his chauffeur's lodge—and more often than not his chauffeur's wife; and at the opposite pole, the intelligent man of taste doomed to worry along in surroundings of manufactured ugliness.

If it is not in the nature of art that it should be lived with, how then has this superstition been fastened upon painting alone? Briefly, it came about in this way. The greatest and most far-reaching manifestation of painting in the Western world is the art of Italy from Giotto to Tiepolo. During this epoch the cycle of development ran from the simple dramatic forms of Giotto to the realism of Masaccio, culminated in the monumental designs of Michael Angelo, lost something of its power in the sensuous abundance of Titian and Veronese, and declined swiftly in the sentimentalities of Guido Reni and the eclectics. You may prefer the art of the earlier men—just now Piero della Francesca, by reason of his intellectual aloofness, is coming into fashion—but it does not matter here; what I wish to emphasize is that Italian painting from first to last, though in a descending scale, was religious iconography. Practically the entire spiritual strength of the people went into art: in it were embodied poetry, philosophy, sacred story-telling, and criticism of life; it had a meaning and a message; it was motivated by intense conviction; in short, it was the predominant expressive medium. Furthermore, it must be borne in mind that painting was conceived and executed as frescoes for churches, town halls and palaces; it was mural decoration in the grand style designed to exalt, reprove and

purge the soul—but it was far too strenuous a force to be lived with. Indeed there was no thought of living with it, and the Florentine citizen of the High Renaissance, though affected in no small measure by painting, came into actual contact with it only periodically. I am well aware of the concurrent production of the small, detached pictures of this period, but these too, let it be noted, were conceived as murals. Even portraits which increased as the religious motifs lost their integrity, were commissioned for predetermined backgrounds, serving not only as symbols of princely and papal vanity but as public records.

Italian painting declined for reasons which must be left to the historian—loss of liberty, social disintegration and the consequent weakening of religious convictions—it is with the nature of the decline that we have here to deal. The influence of the Renaissance spread into other lands and invading foreigners, Poussin, Claude Lorrain, Rubens, Van Dyck, Ribera, and Velasquez, excelled the Italians at their own game. New schools arose, Dutch, Flemish, Spanish, English and French, bringing new vitality to art, but henceforth the development of painting was away from the mural into more exclusive and less viable channels. Never again was it to recover the universal appeal it had enjoyed in its original Mediterranean home, and such imaginative strength as remained in Italy after the corruption of painting in the Eighteenth Century passed into music. Gradually art ceased to be religious iconography, and having no definite objective, ceased to function as a unifying spiritual agent and became a sporadic pastime.

Out of this disorder emerged the easel-picture, the invention, as we understand it to-day, of the Italians and the Dutch, and later on, that bastard commodity, the salon-picture for which the French are largely culpable. The production of art continued, as it always will, but the painter, deprived of an organic destination for his canvases and working more or less without purpose, had no choice but to sell himself to the dealer and the collector. Approaching the present, we encounter scattered and heroic figures who have attempted to rescue painting from the snobbery of the

salon—Rembrandt, Goya, Delacroix, Daumier, and Cézanne, names which have gone round the world. These men have had many disciples but their influence has operated almost exclusively upon artists, and the modern world blunders on, heedless of the art of the past and suspicious of the contemporary painter's ability to contribute anything worth while to life or thought.

We have to-day a deplorable state of affairs: the survival of painting in the shape of the easel- or cabinet-picture. There are in the United States I know not how many thousands of painters who turn out year after year I know not how many hundreds of thousands of pictures, hoping somehow to sell them and with the ensuing profits to spend the rest of their lives loafing in France. Most of these pictures do not sell and do not deserve to sell. They are muscular exercises with no artistic reason for existence. Annually we are confronted with subsidized competitions corresponding to the foreign salons: in these exhibitions each contestant paints a fish, a nude, or a flower in the style of a Continental celebrity and prays to be rewarded with money and renown. Needless to say, he wins little of either, but if he is a clever fellow, he may dispose of a few canvases by making them pleasing, that is, inoffensive, to people who do not really need pictures. Thus the easeldish: a picture painted by an artist with no conviction to please a public with no pictorial sense.

The detached, movable picture, as I have said, is not a recent invention; it was known to the Greeks and common among the Orientals, but we must not overlook the distinction between the old and the modern forms. In the old art it was simply a mural on a smaller scale; to-day it is an inexpressive background. And the murals of the present time are no more than enlarged easel-pictures, no more than so much feeble or gaudy wallpaper. The contemporary mural need not detain us. You may doubt its existence, but with the aid of binoculars it may be detected in our theatres and capitols. The finest murals in America, not forgetting those of Puvis de Chavannes in Boston, the most inspiring, the most apposite, the most satisfying to the æsthetic soul, are

the tempera maps in the main waiting room of the Pennsylvania Station in New York. The rest are, without exception, of a piece with commonplace book illustration—silly fairy tales or garbled thefts from classicism representing idiotic frolics of nymphs and satyrs, Vulcan and Mars heaving pig-iron in the mills of Pittsburgh, and college athletes receiving the bays from Olympian juries. The Sargents and Abbeyes may be classed with the colored “cut-out” and the paper doll.

The easel-picture into which the entire artistic energy of modern times has been deflected is only a background and as such can readily be lived with. Often enough it retains the charm of subdued color and dainty sentiment, but such qualities have little to do with art. Most English painting is laden with charm but all the same it is æsthetically worthless. The modern critic must not be condemned too harshly for chattering solemnly of scintillating brush-work, crepuscular shadows, and nacreous textures. What else is there to criticize? The easel-picture is decoration in the popular sense; as garniture for a room it fulfills the same physical office as vases of flowers, draperies, and reticent porcelain. Once hung, it sinks immediately into the wall and becomes a background, a colored stain; remove it and it will never be missed unless the newly exposed rectangle has not faded into the same tone as the adjacent areas. The present craze for early American rooms cannot be ascribed to any sudden appreciation of Colonial craftsmanship, but to the quaint appropriateness of the ensemble in which the pictures—the honest portraits, the engraved maps and clippers—and the samplers and mottoes constitute the decorative background.

When art forfeits its spiritual power and no longer serves to transmit the deepest experiences of the race, it ends in innocuous decoration. Thus the positive and negative divisions of painting:

Impossible to live with.

Old Masters
Rembrandt

Velasquez
 Goya
 El Greco
 Brueghel
 Delacroix
 Daumier
 Cézanne
 Cubism
 Futurism
 Expressionism and all branches of modernism.

Easy to live with.

Landscapes
 Japanese prints
 Water-colors
 Etchings
 Drawings
 Impressionist painting
 English art except Blake, Turner and Hogarth
 Actresses
 Duchesses
 Fruit
 Game
 Sheep, cows and sunsets.

Most landscapes are laborious transcripts of nature, dead as old graveyards and so void of imagination as to cause the beholder, if he is attracted at all, a momentary feeling of dull tranquillity. Impressionist pictures, water-colors, and Japanese prints tempt the eye with the fugitive appeal of lovely color; etchings and drawings belong in the portfolio, and portraits are emblems of conceit.

The manifest absurdity of prescribing modernist painting as a sedative influence in the home I have already pointed out. In truth the one and only excuse for the new movement was that it threatened to destroy with a vengeance static prettiness in art and to substitute a highly provocative idiom directly affiliated in purport and structure with

the great tradition. But alas, this uprising has dwindled into a timorous and livable issue! Instead of the straightforward pursuit of a native mural style, our younger men have effected a compromise between Cézanne and the academy, and are painting, according to French formulæ, portraits, still-life and landscape. It is the same old story: the surrender to the dealer and the small buying public that wishes to possess art—after it is dead—and to boast of the possession, but in no circumstances to foster new and legitimate tendencies. And it is interesting to follow the pretentiousness of the belated discoverers of Cubism and the abstract sects, not only the lay-braggarts but the artists. They understand it all now! Yes, they understand it and practice it—after it has become academic in spirit and radical only in externals; they are out to capitalize it and hang it in every home together with the sheep, the wild ducks and the duchesses.

The average intelligent man, capable of responding to the other arts, with an interest in music and the theatre and a library that is more than a wall decoration, is likely to dismiss painting entirely. Moreover, writers of distinction, and the shrewdest critics of literature, are contemptuous of pictures and cannot be forced into a gallery. Why should they give their time to an art which is, at the one extreme, less stimulating because of its fidelity to nature than photography, and at the other, an abstract agglomeration so remote from experience as to be utterly meaningless? This candid antipathy is less damaging than the attitude of the æsthete who wears his soul on his sleeve and gabbles of art from morning till night. I know there are a few who profess to live in perpetual communion with pictures, who swear they are awakened in the dawn's early light by the lyrical notes of painted surfaces carolling like the songs of birds, and wander through the day in a drunken ecstasy of adoration. But I do not believe them. Show me the man who professes to live with painting and I will show you a mountebank or a maniac. The painter himself does not attempt it—if he is in his right mind. His studio is filled with pictures—always his own—representing despair and disillusion. When

he wishes to enjoy art, he closes his shop and goes elsewhere. Certain collectors have been known to employ a good deal of their time with painting, but they, like the miser, are animated by a swollen acquisitive instinct.

I am not trying to deprive people of the benefits of art; I only wish to stress some of the prevailing evils and encumbrances. Of those who affect to care for painting, how many actually do—sincerely and with passion? Personally I have grown up with pictures, but it is not often that I am excited by them. My study is hung with masterpieces—reproductions it is unnecessary to add—but I am rarely conscious of their presence. Day after day I stare at the walls from my desk, but the prints are only blind spots on the retina. Once in a while I look at them. I have a number of original paintings—but they are too gentle to interrupt me. The Orientals had the right idea; they contrived their domestic decorations in the form of scrolls which were exhibited section by section and at the conclusion rolled up again and put aside temporarily. To-day very few, especially those with a genuine love for art, are fortunate enough to possess a single picture of merit. The prices of even passable canvases make ownership impossible to all but the wealthy—and the artist paints to satisfy the dealer. In such conditions the museum, for all that may truthfully be urged against it, is invaluable. It is disheartening to think that the treasures of the world should be stuffed heterogeneously into a few dismal galleries, but with contemporary art only a toy for the rich, the museum is the last resort. Better the occasional contact with a good picture than the passive association with pictures made to sell.

I can imagine a more pleasant order of things. It has frequently been asserted that modern materialism has killed the religious perceptions of man, but against this assertion let the immense vitality in the other arts, the novel, the theatre, music and architecture, bear witness. I should like to see some of this vitality embodied in painting. Numerically we have in America plenty of painters but their art is nerveless and socially inconsequential. I should like to see most of these men, the modernists particularly, working

in the crafts and in magazine illustration instead of frantically aping the French. Out of this background in due course men of greater plastic genius would arise and carry painting into the highest and hardest fields. And with art an active agent again, pictures would, of course, be accessible. To be lived with? Not exactly. Minor works would perform the same office as heretofore, as so much cheerful wallpaper; the more dramatic pieces, being vastly more numerous, would attain general circulation. One or two good pictures would suffice for any home, provided these might, after their effectiveness had waned, be exchanged for others. Increase in production would automatically destroy the collector's desire to gobble up masterpieces, and would, in addition, make feasible the liberal interchange of pictures. The proper arrangement would be to have a room devoted exclusively to paintings—four or five with ample space between them—a sort of sanctuary to be entered only when one felt in the mood. By all means let us have pictures, the more the better—but let them be too interesting to be lived with.

RICHARD R. KIRK

ON THE SERIOUSNESS OF LIFE

Life is a serious thing, you say?
Measured by what standard, pray?

A SUBSTITUTE

Deprived of joy, I marked that it befell,
For many a one, that sorrow did as well.

MUST YOU GO?

Stay a little longer, Life, pray do!
I dread a lonely house, and if you go
I know the others will too.

HAPPILY

I know, or think I know, the world is nought;
But happily I've only sometimes caught
Myself believing truly what I've thought.

THE DEVIL

From church the Devil leads astray
Some who otherwise would pray;
Yet some, who otherwise would sin,
Are by the Devil frightened in.

HOW COMFORTING

How comforting is speech! How very grateful
The sense of having uttered something hateful!
And yet, again, how charming, how delightful,
To know we could be, if we would be, spiteful!

TO HOLD MY TONGUE

Giving you no advice, you must have guessed
That I myself had taken the very best.

OUR FRIENDS AND OUR ENEMIES

For the behaviors of our friends
Our enemies make some amends.

THE JOURNEY TO BE TAKEN

Above a grave there hangs a star.
Teach me, O Astronomer!
Not to think the journey far
From this earth to her.

EPITAPH FOR ALMOST ANYONE

Here lies anyone you please
To think him; now at ease
After long striving to be thot
Someone he was certainly not.

WE GO A-RIDING

Each astride
Of his private donkey,
All men ride.

Since man was monkey,
Men have gone
Riding on
To their fall.

Body, body,
When you blunder,
Let me crawl
Out from under!

ALLEN TATE

TWO POEMS

..ODE TO THE CONFEDERATE DEAD (1861-65)

Row after row with strict impunity
The headstones barter their names to the element,
The wind whirrs without recollection;
In the riven troughs broken leaves
Pile up, of nature the casual sacrament
Against the sinkage of death;
Then, in uncertainty of their election,
Of their business in the vast breath,
They sough the rumor of mortality.

Autumn is desolation in the plot
Of a thousand acres where these memories grow.
Think of the autumns that have come and gone,
Ambitious Novembers with the humors of the year,
With a particular zeal for every slab,
Staining the uncomfortable angels that rot
On the slabs, a wing chipped here, an arm there:
The brute curiosity of an angel's stare
Turns you, like them, to stone,
Transforms the heaving air,
Till plunged to a heavier world below
You shift your sea-space blindly, like a crab.

You know, who have waited by the wall,
The fierce uncertainty of an animal;
Those midnight restitutions of the blood
You know; the immitigable pines; the smoky frieze
Of the sky; the sudden call; you know the rage
Of Heraclitus and Parmenides.
You who have waited for the angry resolution
Of those desires that should be yours tomorrow,

You know the unimportant shrift of death
And praise the vision,
And praise the immodest circumstance
Of those who fall
Rank upon rank, hurried beyond decision—
Here at this stile, once more, you know it all.

Turn your eyes into the immoderate past,
Find there the inscrutable demons rising,
The infantry out of the earth; they will not last.
Stonewall, Stonewall; and the sunk fields of hemp;
Shiloh, Antietam, Malvern Hill, Bull Run;
In the orient of that economy
You have cursed the setting sun.
You hear the shout; the crazy hemlocks point
With troubled fingers to the silence which
Engulfs you like a mummy in time, whose niche
Lacks aperture.

Now that the salt of their blood
Stiffens the saltier oblivion of the sea,
Seals the malignant purity of the flood,
What shall we, who count our days and bow
Our heads with a commemorial woe,
In the ribboned coats of grim felicity—
What shall we say of the dirty sons
Whose legs and arms, guts, heads, and teeth
Stretched out the justice of efficiency?
The gray lean spiders come; they come and go.
In a tangle of willows without light
The singular screech-owl's tight
Invisible lyric seeds the mind
With the furious murmur of their chivalry.

We have not sung; we shall not ever sing
In the improbable mist of nightfall,
Which flies on multiple wing;
It has only a beginning and an end;
And in between the ends of distraction
Lurks mute speculation, the patient curse

Which stones the eyes, or like the jaguar leaps
For the jaguar's image in a jungle pool, his victim.

What shall we say who have knowledge
Carried to the heart? Shall we take the act
To the grave? Shall we, more hopeful, set up the grave
In the house? The ravenous grave?

Leave now

The turnstile and the decomposing wall:
The gentle serpent, green in the mulberry bush,
Riots with his tongue through the hush—
See him what he knows—he knows it all!

OBITUARY

In Memoriam: S.B.V. 1834-1909

. . . so what the lame four-poster gathered here
Between the lips of stale and seasoned sheets
Startles a memory, sunlit, upon the wall.
Motors and urchins contest the city streets.

While toward the bed the rigid shadows lean
Stung to the patience of all emptiness,
Memorially arrested where she slept—
Jerky gnats plunge through the haggard screen.

And now upstairs the lint that crusts the sills
Erodes to a windy shift along the floor.
Her touselled eyes no longer rinse the haze
Of winter sprawled like a carcass by the door.

Feet, thickly alternate, are withdrawn
To the hard ease of lacquered pine that clamps
The shuffled fists into the breast and neck.

(Time begins to elucidate her bones)
Then you, so crazy and inviolate,
Will finger the console with a number touch,
Go by the horsehair sofa, the gilded frames—
Crushed in the terrible stoop you loved so much.

F. B. KAYE

THE PROLEGOMENON TO DRYASDUST,
OR THE SCHOLAR'S VADE MECUM

PROFESSOR BISSENSCHWITZ is dead. The labors that supported four learned periodicals and a charming wife (as all who knew Frau Doctor Bissenschwitz will agree) are over. But none of his students will ever forget him, nor can he ever be overlooked by any student of the pastoral tragedy produced from 1507 to 1509.

It seems but yesterday that I sat in his seminar, a fledgling scholar, the half-chewed volumes still hanging, as it were, from my mouth. I recall especially one session of the class. As the Doctor entered the room we saw that his eyes were heavy and his mouth drawn. "Gentlemen," he said, "I have a confession to make. Yesterday I found a quotation the source of which I did not know. As I was pondering the origin of the passage I went to my bookcase and opened a volume as if intuitively—and there was the original of the quotation. I am ashamed that this should have happened to *me*. But now I shall leave you and not see you again until I have discovered that quotation by the correct scholarly procedure." When he returned to us after two weeks he had found the passage in the right way.

Ex ungue leonem. Never was there a scholar with more command over the instruments of research. With him, scholarship had been developed and systematized like the mechanical sciences. His admirers had repeatedly urged that he perpetuate in some monograph the secrets of his scholarly technique, and he had given them hope; but it was thought that he had died without leaving this memorial of his method. As his literary executor, however, I here announce that I have found the very document the learned world has so desired.

It is not in the form one would have expected. It is no dissertation. The Professor has followed the example of John Sebastian Bach, who, when asked to write a treatise

on the art of fugue, produced instead the fugues themselves. In like manner, the Doctor has left us, not a monograph on the art of editing, but a specimen of that editing itself.

The subject of Professor Bissenschwitz's editorial labors is a short essay of a non-scholarly nature by Professor Niesenwurzel, a savant of the older generation. It may be that Doctor Bissenschwitz never published his edition, because, as the reader will remember, the Doctor and Professor Niesenwurzel came to have a serious controversy. Doctor Bissenschwitz had noted the phenomenon that so many effeminate youths were called "Percy" and "Harold." This struck him as very strange, for, as a master of history, he knew that "Percy" and "Harold" were once the names of the very bravest and manliest. Then he put forth a theory to account for the degradation of these names. Parents of puny children, he said, had consistently attempted to counteract their offspring's deficiency by investing them with heroic appellations; with the result that these names had come to lose their pristine glory. Professor Niesenwurzel at once replied to this. Parents, he answered, believe that their children resemble them. To believe, therefore, that their children were defective, they would have to believe their own lack of perfection. But this is impossible. Therefore, he concluded, parents never name their children in accord with Doctor Bissenschwitz's hypothesis. Professor Niesenwurzel could not resist several witticisms unfitted to the gravity of the topic, and there was some bitterness about the matter.

However, whether or not Doctor Bissenschwitz buried his article for this reason, the world has it at last. F.B.K.

DOOMSDAY BOOKS

By Paul Arthur Amadeus Niesenwurzel

Edited by Peter Bissenschwitz

D. Litt. (Cantab.), Hon. LL.D. (Harvard), Ph.D. (Bonn)
Professor of Literary Morphography at the University of
Rumpelstieg

PREFACE

I wish to thank my many friends and helpers. In especial, I desire to acknowledge my debt to Professors Carl von Blum and Friedrich Max, to Sir Isaac Dippel, and to Mr. Adolph Schwilfest. I must also mention the pleasant recollections I have of the cooperation of my graduate students, who collated the text, identified the sources, verified the references, prepared the index, and read the proof. But most of all I must thank my wife, without whose constant encouragement and assistance this edition could never have been completed.

P.B.

Rumpelstieg
Jan. 16, 1903

DOOMSDAY BOOKS

"I am mad but north-north-west."¹

A scientist has calculated that, if left to spawn unchecked, in only a few thousand generations the most minute animalcule could fill the whole earth, and, indeed, the entire universe. I wonder no one has yet made this observation about books. Of making books there is no end, nor will be; for who can persuade an author that he should not write, or, having written, should not publish. Bred, as books are, in ever-increasing measure, it will take only a few thousand years before, inevitably, the world will have room for no other material.

Do these few millenia make this eventuality seem too remote for concern? It should not be so. Infinite time itself,

¹ This passage from *Hamlet*, II, ii, is inaccurately quoted.

Some controversy has arisen as to why Niesenwurzle chose the motto which heads this page. It has been argued that he called himself "mad but north-north-west" to indicate that he wished his essay to be interpreted seriously in certain parts, notably in the concluding passages on the vanity of scholarship, philosophy, and literature. It has even been argued that a genuine melancholy runs through this essay. With this I cannot agree. One is either serious or not serious, and does not obtrude philosophy into farce. Niesenwurzle is flippant throughout. Cf. below.

once passed, forms in our mind but a fraction of that fleeting instant called the present; and, sooner or later, all conceivable futurity is contracted into that present. There is in each of us a sense of the tireless pace of time. What one of us, awaiting some still distant pain, has not seen it inevitably upon him, and then long past? What one of us has not felt the essential evanescence of the most durable things? It is to me a poignant observation how the many who proclaimed the irretardable encroachment of death and decay have now so long been justified, and are themselves the instance of their own teaching.

But at my back I always hear
Time's winged chariot hurrying near.

At your back, Poet? It is *past* you and its dust has clogged your nostrils these two centuries and a half. For Time stalks down all game, and the most distant futurities are upon us, and then in immemorial antiquity.

Impute, therefore, to no forced and hypochondriac concern reflections on that world of books which so inexorably approaches. In that world, little can appear as it does now. As billions upon billions of books thrust all other materials out of existence, the ends for which these vanished substances were used must be fulfilled by the invading horde of volumes. Houses, roads, vehicles, all must be made of them. It is indeed to be hoped that a fit taste will govern the books selected for each purpose: that no Philistine Gradgrind will devote a library of Elizabethan authors to the construction of a Georgian dwelling or wainscot a meeting house with the *Contes Drôlatiques*. Bad taste, however, is a snake more often scotched than killed,¹ and some

¹ See *Macbeth*, III, ii. 13: "We have scotch'd the snake, not killed it." This passage, which has aroused critical controversy since the inception of Shakespearean exegesis, I am at length, fortunately, able to explain. We know that meat prepared à l'*Ecossais*, or Scotch fashion, is meat, which, while sufficiently cooked after its kind, is not actually "browned." We know, also, from the prevalence of such phrases as "His goose is cooked," that Shakespeare must have been aware of the expression "done up brown" with the sense of "completely disposed of." When, therefore, Shakespeare writes, "We have scotch'd the snake, not killed it," he means, "We have prepared the snake scotch fashion (*id est*, half, or superficially, browned it), but have not thoroughly done it up brown (that is, disposed

breaches of fitness are to be expected. But, on the whole, necessity will insure that the proper literary material be used for each purpose. He would be a foolish merchant who undertook to sell raincoats made from the works of Richardson. Some less lachrymose material would be demanded; and, indeed, the enterprising maker of raincoats could easily find abundance of books of sufficient impregnable dryness. Any competent upholsterer, too, would understand the propriety of constructing his beds from the works of D——.¹

Not only the utensils of men, however, but the very globe itself will suffer a profound change. No longer will the oceans part continent from continent, for myriads of books will have filled up the seas. The very fields will have altered, since underneath their surface will be stored a part of the plethora of books. It is difficult to estimate the change that all this will induce in man himself. Now at last books will begin to exert the determinant effect that has sometimes been claimed for them. The climate will have been altered; this and the change in the soil will have transformed the food on which we live. Sweet potatoes rooted in a subsoil of Bowdler's edition of Shakespeare cannot be as other sweet potatoes. Eggplants growing over a foundation of the *Ecclesiastical Polity* cannot be as other eggplants.² With climate, food, houses, utensils, all transformed, and, as it were, voluminously librified, man will in truth be grown a bookworm.

of it completely)." Perhaps, also, in this complaint at Banquo's line having been done up merely Scotch fashion, there speaks Shakespeare's contempt of foreign institutions.

¹There are 367 authors whose names would fit. See my article on "Asterisks and Dashes in Victorian Literature," in *The Review of Intensive Philology*, XX (1893), 37-810.

²In the rough draft of this essay, which is in my possession, the catalogue of vegetables was considerably longer. In addition to the sweet potato and eggplant mentioned, Niesenwurzel wrote of "Jerusalem artichokes grown over the various Lives of St. Patrick," of "knob celery flourishing in a soil of works on phrenology," and of "onions rooted in a bed of Gautier and Verlaine." With this more complete catalogue of vegetables in view, Professor Max has conjectured with some plausibility that Niesenwurzel, when he penned his list of vegetables, had in mind the catalogue of the ships in Homer. Professor von Blum argues that Niesenwurzel was thinking of the roll of the devils in *Paradise Lost*. With all this, however, I am quite in disagreement, for the devils are quite different from the vegetables. My own inference is that the catalogue of vegetables is reminiscent of the flowers cited by Ophelia—rue, fennel, and rosemary. Note for example the kinship of sound between "Verlaine" as used by Niesenwurzel and "Saint Valentine's day" mentioned by Ophelia.

As that time approaches, what author is there who will not somewhat feel the dread responsibility of adding one more book to the accumulation already engulfing the earth? But, indeed, since that time inevitably does approach, it is as great, though not so obvious, a responsibility to add one now. It were well indeed to ask oneself what is to be gained by the contribution of any book, although the query may lead to pessimism.

How, for example, may a utilitarian justify the works of learning perpetually outpoured? Here is an erudite specialist who has spent a whole life in correcting errors that are not even vulgar errors. He has raised a supposition, or, to make the case favorable for him, let us say he has proved, that Shakespeare never poached any deer. An uninteresting fact has been substituted for an amusing fiction. Who is the gainer? Let us say that the true discovery fits in better with the actual scheme of things, is more conducive to a true philosophy, may lead to other more notable discoveries. This has a noble ring. But, granting it often true, who really benefits? The small scholarly class. Learned books are a luxury to them and produced to receive their gratitude and approbation: they supply a demand. It is disheartening to justify scholarship by the law of supply and demand. This is not, however, because there is anything base about this law, for all things whatsoever are good only because there is demand for them; it is because these learned works fill so small a demand. They are not a joy to as many people as are a good dinner,¹ or a new

¹ Interpretations of this phrase, "a good dinner," vary greatly. It has not yet been settled to the agreement of experts. Juvenal interprets it (*Satires*, I, 141) as "apros, animal propter convivium natum"; Henry IV, as "a chicken in the pot o' Sundays"; Solomon (*Proverbs*, XV, 17), as "a dinner of herbs where love is"; and Omar Khayyam (*Rubáiyát* 12), as "a Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou," this last perhaps indicating a belief in cannibalism, derived possibly from Fitzgerald's readings in the classics (cf. references to Pelops' feast in Euripides, *Orestes* 15, and Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1054-5). Unorthodox interpretations of this phrase abound. Genseric favored suckling infants with a Béarnaise sauce, while it will be recollected that the venerable Mr. Gladstone once nearly lost an election because it transpired that he enjoyed eating vanilla ice-cream with tomato catsup.

All these interpretations are faulty, because they are all subjective, being based on their authors' personal tastes. No final answer will be reached as to what constitutes a good dinner until a proper scholarly objective method is employed, in which individual preferences shall be entirely eliminated.

frock, or a ruby. Why, then, do diligent and expert scholars spend years in polishing the never-to-be-checked-up notes in a hardly-ever-to-be-read book? Perhaps it is the mood which impels an artist to finish carefully the back of a statue, when he knows that this statue is meant to be placed, and should be placed, in a position in which the back will never be seen. It is a mood in which artistry turns into pedantry, when mere pleasure in the exercise of a faculty takes the place of any objective results of such exercise. Learned books, in other words, are largely self-indulgence.

Equally dispiriting is a consideration of the value of published philosophy. The more one has attempted to alter the opinions of the world, the more one is tempted to ask, *cui bono?* Galileo, indeed, may eventually convince a stubborn world that the earth does go around the sun. But that is really because his problem is not a vital matter. The profound problem is what use the human soul will make of the knowledge that the earth goes around the sun. You may pile Galileo upon Copernicus here without much effect. If, in our hearts, we are so made that for us the sun goes around our world, it will continue so to revolve despite all the Galileos. You may unmake a Ptolemæan, but not an egoist. Concerning really deep issues we never convert. At most we sometimes reveal a reader to himself, showing him the self-expression for which he groped, and then, perhaps, the misfit he took ready-made or, bungling, hacked out for himself will be cast off. The disillusioned philosopher will therefore reach out only for those who are already predisposed to agree with him. We are here somewhat like children in a game choosing sides. "Why, yes, I am such and such a person, I see. I never knew it. I am on your side."¹

These pessimistic reflections do not apply to works meant only for delight. These books give a positive pleasure not entirely to be discounted by cynical analysis. But, as there are already more good, and, indeed, great, books in the world than anyone, be he Porson, Macaulay, or Doctor John-

¹ What exquisite skill is shown in the close of this paragraph! The words dance like the children in a game; we can almost hear the tapping of youthful feet. "Such and such a person"—a chime of young laughter rings in those words.

son himself, can possibly read, it is difficult to see what can be gained by the addition of more, except as an indulgence to the author.

Well as Chekov said, "If you look into it, what a lot of courage and faith in one's self does it need to teach a child, to judge a criminal, to write a big book." . . . But, still, I have faith, though it may be only the clinging of an official to an outworn office. Even after the Rattenfänger passed through Hamelin, the man who had formerly been the town's official rat-catcher undoubtedly felt that he was still sacrosanct. . . .¹

Eheu! I feel chilly and grown old. A vision of the eventual world of books comes to me. I see that, as the books swarm and multiply, the use of spectacles increases in proportion. The earth glimmers and sparkles from millions and millions of glasses. I see these myriad lenses act as a stupendous compound burning glass. I see the final conflagration.

The End.²

¹This whole passage is probably simply an instance of that flippancy in dealing with serious matters which often—alas!—repels the reader of Niesenwurz. It is hardly possible that our author wished to be taken seriously. He was himself a writer and scholar; and how thoroughly he felt the dignity of his calling he showed in the directions left by him for his funeral—to be borne to his grave on the shoulders of his students as they sang his favorite song, "Round about the Mulberry Bush."

²The second edition has "Finis."

ROBERT PENN WARREN

KENTUCKY MOUNTAIN FARM

At the hour of the Breaking of the Rocks

BEYOND the wrack and eucharist of snow
The tortured and reluctant rock again
Receives the sunlight and the tarnished rain.
Such is the hour of sundering, we know,
Who on the hills have seen to stand and pass
Stubbornly the taciturn
Lean men that of all things alone
Were, not as water or the febrile grass,
Figured in kinship to the savage stone.

The hills are weary, the lean men have passed;
The rocks are stricken and the frost has torn
Away their ridged fundamentals at last,
So that the fractured atoms now are borne
Down shifting waters to the tall, profound
Shadow of the absolute deeps,
Wherein the spirit moves and never sleeps
That held the foot among the rocks, that bound
The weary hand upon the stubborn plow,
Knotted the flesh unto the hungry bone,
The red-bud to the charred and broken bough,
And strung the bitter tendons of the stone.

HART CRANE

AVE MARIA

Be with me, Luis de San Angel, now, —
Witness before the tides can wrest away
The word I bring, O you who reined my suit
Into the Queen's great heart that doubtful day;
For I have seen what now no seasoned breath
Of clown or courtier riddles or gainsays;
And you, Fray Juan Perez, whose counsel fear
And greed adjourned,—I bring you back Cathay!

Here waves climb into dusk on gleaming mail;
Invisible valves of the sea,—locks, tendons
Crested and creeping, troughing corridors
That fall back yawning to another plunge.
Slowly the sun's red caravel drops light
Once more behind us . . . It is morning there,—
O where our other cities, mountains steep
White spires in heaven, yet hammocked in this keel!

I thought of Genoa: and this truth, now proved,
That made me exile in her streets, stood me
More absolute than ever—biding the moon
'Til dawn should lift that darkened coast to us
—The Chan's great continent . . . And nightingales
Nigh surged me witless, voices far swept near.
I, wonder-breathing, kept the watch,—saw
The first palm chevron the first lighted hill.

And lowered. And they came out to us crying,
"The Great White Birds!" (O Madre María, still
One ship of these thou givest safe returning;
Assure us through thy mantle's ageless blue!)

—All this,—far more floats written in a casque,
 Was tumbled from us under bare poles scudding;
 And later hurricanes may claim more pawn . . .
 For here between two worlds, another, harsh,

This third, of water, tests the Word; lo, here
 Bewilderment and mutiny heap whelming
 Laughter, and shadow cuts sleep from the heart
 Almost as though the Moor's flung scimitar
 Found more than flesh to fathom in its bed.
 Yet under tempest-lash and surfeitings
 Some inmost sob, half-heard, retrieves the abyss,
 Merges the wind in measure to the wave

Series on series, infinite,—'til eyes
 Starved wide on blackened tides, accrete,—enclose
 This turning rondure whole, this crescent ring
 Sun-rimmed and zoned with modulated fire
 Like pearls that whisper through the Doge's hands
 —Yet no delirium of jewels! O Fernando,
 Take of this eastern shore, this western sea,
 Yet yield thy God's, thy Virgin's charity!

. . .

—Rush down the plenitude, and you shall see
 Isaiah counting famine on this lee!

. . .

An herb, a stray branch among salty teeth,
 The jellied weeds that drag the shore,—perhaps
 Tomorrow's eve will bring us Saltes Bar—
 Palos again,—a land cleared of long war.
 Some angelus environs the cordage tree;
 Dark waters onward shake the dark prow free.

. . .

O Thou who sleepest on Thyself, apart
 Like ocean, athwart lanes of death and birth,
 And all the eddying breath between dost search
 Cruelly with love thy parable of man,—

Inquisitor! incognizable Word
 Of Eden and the enchained Sepulchre,
 Into thy steep savannahs, burning blue,
 Utter to loneliness the sail is true.

Who grindest oar, and arguing the mast
 Subscribest holocaust of ships, O Thou
 Within whose primal scan consummately
 The glistening seignories of Ganges swim;—
 Who sendest greeting by the corposant
 And Teneriffe's garnet,—flamed it in a cloud
 Urging through night our passage to the Chan:—
 Te Deum laudamus, thy teeming span.

Of all that amplitude that time explores,
 A needle in the sight, suspended north,—
 Yielding by inference and discard, faith
 And true appointment from the hidden shoal;—
 This disposition that thy night relates
 From Moon to Saturn in one sapphire wheel;—
 The orbic wake of thy once whirling feet,—
 Elohim, still I hear thy sounding heel!

White toil of heaven's cordons, mustering
 In panic rings all sails charged to the far
 Hushed gleaming fields and pendant seething wheat
 Of knowledge,—round thy brows unhooded now
 —The kindled Crown! Acceded of the poles
 And biassed by white sails, meridians reel
 Thy purpose—still one shore beyond desire!
 The sea's green crying towers a-sway, Beyond

And kingdoms

naked in the

trembling heart—

Te Deum laudamus

O Hand of Fire

EUGENE O'NEILL

LAZARUS LAUGHED

A Play for an Imaginative Theatre

CHARACTERS:

LAZARUS OF BETHANY

HIS FATHER

HIS MOTHER

MARTHA } *his sisters*

MARY }

MIRIAM, *his wife*

SEVEN GUESTS, *neighbors of Lazarus*

CHORUS OF JEWISH WOMEN, *neighbors of Lazarus*

AN ORTHODOX PRIEST

CHORUS OF LAZARUS' FOLLOWERS

VARUS, *a Centurion*

GAIUS CALIGULA, *heir to Caesar*

CRASSUS, *a Roman General*

CHORUS OF YOUNG GREEKS

SEVEN CITIZENS OF ATHENS

CHORUS OF ROMAN SENATORS

CHORUS OF LEGIONARIES

FLAVIUS, *a Centurion*

MARCELLUS, *a Patrician*

CHORUS OF THE GUARD

TIBERIUS CAESAR

POMPEIA

CHORUS OF THE YOUTHS AND WOMEN

CHORUS OF THE ROMAN POPULACE

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE: *Lazarus' home in Bethany—a short time after the miracle.*

SCENE TWO: *Many months later. Outside the House of Laughter in Bethany. Late evening.*

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE: *A street in Athens. A night months later.*SCENE TWO: *A temple immediately inside the wall of Rome. Midnight. Months after.*

ACT THREE

SCENE ONE: *Garden of Tiberius' palace. A night a few days later.*SCENE TWO: *Inside the palace. Immediately after.*

ACT FOUR

SCENE ONE: *The same. A while after.*SCENE TWO: *Interior of a Roman theatre. Dawn of the same day.*ACT ONE¹

SCENE 1.

SCENE: *Exterior and interior of LAZARUS' home at Bethany. The main room at the front end of the house is shown—a long, low-ceilinged, sparsely-furnished chamber with white walls gray in the fading daylight that enters from three small windows at the left. To the left of center several long tables, placed lengthwise to the width of the room, around which many chairs for guests have been placed. In the rear wall right, a door leading into the rest of the house. On the left, a doorway opening on a road where a crowd of men has gathered. On the right another doorway leading to the yard in which an equal crowd of women is collected. There are forty-two in each of these outside groups.*

Inside the house, on the men's side, seven male GUESTS are grouped by the door, watching LAZARUS with frightened awe, talking hesitantly in low whispers. On the women's side, the CHORUS OF SEVEN WOMEN are drawn up in a crescent, in the far corner, right, facing LAZARUS. All of these people

¹ Only Act I, which is complete in itself, is given here.

are masked in accordance with the following scheme: There are seven periods of life shown: Boyhood (or Girlhood), Youth, Young Manhood (or Womanhood), Manhood (or Womanhood), Middle Age, Maturity and Old Age—and each of these periods is represented by seven masks portraying general types of character as follows: 1. The Simple, Humble Type; 2. The Happy, Loving Type; 3. The Self-Tortured, Sensitive Type; 4. The Proud, Defiant Type; 5. The Servile, Envious Type; 6. The Revengeful, Cruel Type; 7. The Sorrowful, Resigned Type. Thus in each crowd (this includes the SEVEN GUESTS who are composed of one male of each Period and Type as Period One, Type One: Period Two, Type Two: and so on up to Period Seven, Type Seven; and also includes the CHORUS OF SEVEN WOMEN who are the female counterparts of the SEVEN GUESTS but whose masks mark them distinctively as the CHORUS in that they are double the life-size of all the others) there are forty-nine different combinations of Period and Type. Each Type has a distinct predominant color for its costumes which vary in kind according to its Period.

On a raised platform at the middle of the one table placed lengthwise at center sits LAZARUS, his head haloed and his body illumined by a soft radiance as of tiny phosphorescent flames caressing his flesh, now cleansed of the sorrow of death.

In appearance LAZARUS is tall, large-boned and powerful, about fifty years of age, with a mass of gray-black hair and a heavy beard. His face is dark-complected, ruddy and brown, the color of rich earth upturned by the plough, calm but furrowed deep with the marks of former suffering endured with a grim fortitude that had never softened into resignation. His forehead is broad and noble, his eyes black and deep-set. Just now he is staring straight before him as if his vision were still fixed beyond life. LAZARUS wears no mask. Kneeling beside him with bowed heads are his wife, MIRIAM, his sisters, MARTHA and MARY, and his FATHER and MOTHER. MIRIAM is a slender, delicate woman of thirty-six, dressed in deep black, who holds one of his hands in both of hers, and keeps her lips pressed to it. Her

face is half-covered by a mask which conceals her forehead, eyes and nose, but leaves her mouth revealed. The mask is the pure white of marble, the expression that of a statue of Woman, of her eternal acceptance of the compulsion of motherhood, the inevitable cycle of love into pain into joy and new love into separation and pain again and the loneliness of age. The eyes of the mask are almost closed. Their gaze turns within as they dream down on the child forever in memory at the breast. The mouth of MIRIAM is sensitive and mobile, tender with a sad smile of comprehensive, deep-knowing love, the lips still fresh and young with the kisses of children. Her skin, in contrast to the mask, is sunburned and earth-colored like that of Lazarus.

MARTHA is a buxom housewife, plain and pleasant. Her mask is fundamentally the Crowd one of the Period of Womanhood (28-35) in the Simple, Humble Type. But as she is a definite character in the play (although a minor one) her mask also clearly reveals the essential characteristics of her own personality. This is true also of MARY and the FATHER and MOTHER. MARY wears the crowd-mask of Young Womanhood in the Proud, Defiant Type. She is pretty. Her figure is strong and slender. The two parents wear the crowd-masks of Old Age in the same Simple, Humble Type. They differ from their crowd-masks, as individuals, in both being a trifle finer-grained, more sensitive and gentler. The FATHER is about 80, the MOTHER over 65.

All the masks of these Jews of the first two scenes of the play are pronouncedly Semitic. The face of LAZARUS, however, bears a resemblance in its general character, and particularly in its quality of detached serenity, to that of a statue of Ancient Greece.

A background of twilight sky. A dissolving touch of sunset still marks the rim of the horizon.

It is some hours after the miracle and JESUS has gone away.

CHORUS OF WOMEN (in a quavering rising and falling evocation—their arms outstretched toward LAZARUS).

Jesus wept!
Behold how he loved him!

Lazarus, come forth!

He that liveth!
He that believeth!
Shall never die!

CROWD (*on either side of house, echo the chant*).

He that liveth.
Shall never die!
Lazarus, come forth!

1ST GUEST (*a Simple Boy*). That strange light seems to come from within him. (*With awe*) Think of it! For four days he lay in the tomb! (*He turns away with a shudder.*)

2ND GUEST (*a Happy Youth, with reassuring conviction*). It is a holy light. It came from Jesus.

5TH GUEST (*an Envious, Middle-Aged Man*). Maybe if the truth was known, our friend there never really died at all!

4TH GUEST (*a Defiant Man, indignantly*). Do you doubt the miracle? I tell you I was here in this house when Lazarus died!

7TH GUEST (*an Aged, Sorrowful man*). And I used to visit him every day. He knew himself his hour was near.

4TH GUEST. He said to me one day: "I have known my fill of life and the sorrow of living. Soon I shall know peace. And he smiled. It was the first time I had seen him smile in years. He wished for death!"

3RD GUEST (*a Self-Tortured Man*). In his place any one might have wished——

7TH GUEST. Yes, of late years his life had been one long misfortune.

3RD GUEST. One after another his children died—and he had loved them so tenderly.

6TH GUEST (*a Mature Man with a cruel face—with a harsh laugh*). Even though they were all girls!

7TH GUEST. The seventh was a boy.

6TH GUEST. Oh, the one that died at birth—I forgot him.

7TH GUEST. Lazarus could never forget. Not only did his son die, but Miriam could never after bear him more children.

5TH GUEST (*practically*). But Lazarus cannot blame bad luck for everything. Take the loss of his father's wealth since he came into the management. That was his own doing. He was a bad farmer, a poor breeder of sheep, and a bargainer so easy to cheat it hurt one's conscience to trade with him!

6TH GUEST (*with a sneer—maliciously*). You should know best about that! (*A suppressed laugh from those around them.*)

1ST GUEST (*who has been gazing at Lazarus—softly*). Ssssh! Look at his face. (*They all stare. A pause.*)

2ND GUEST (*with wondering awe*). Do you remember, neighbors, before he died? He used to be pale even when he worked in the fields. Now he seems as ruddy and brown as one who has labored in the earth all day in a vineyard beneath the hot sun. (*A pause.*)

4TH GUEST. The whole look of his face is changed. He is like a stranger from a far land. There is no sorrow in his eyes. They must have forgotten sorrow in the grave!

5TH GUEST (*grumbling*). I thought we were invited here to eat—and all we do is stand and gape at him!

4TH GUEST (*sternly*). Be silent! We are waiting for him to speak.

3RD GUEST. He did speak once—and he laughed!

ALL (*amazed and incredulous*). Laughed?

3RD GUEST (*importantly*). Laughed! I heard him! It was just after the miracle——

MIRIAM (*her voice, rich with sorrow, exultant now*). Jesus cried, "Lazarus, come forth!" (*She kisses his hand. He makes a slight startled movement, a stirring in his vision. The Guests stare. A pause.*)

5TH GUEST (*nudging the 2nd*). Go ahead with your story!

3RD GUEST. Just as Lazarus appeared in the opening of the tomb, wrapped in his shroud——

2ND GUEST. My heart stopped. I fell on my face—and the women screamed—(*sceptically*) You must have sharp ears to have heard Lazarus speak in that uproar!

3RD GUEST. I helped to pry away the stone so I was right beside him. I found myself kneeling—but between my fingers I watched Jesus and Lazarus. Jesus looked into his face for what seemed a long time and suddenly Lazarus said “Yes” as if he was answering a question in Jesus’ eyes.

ALL (*mystified*). Yes? What could he mean by Yes?

3RD GUEST. Then Jesus smiled sadly but with tenderness, as one who from a distance of years of sorrow remembers happiness. And then “Yes” said Lazarus again, and knelt and kissed Jesus’ feet and both of them smiled into each other’s eyes and Jesus blessed him and called him “My Brother” and went away; and Lazarus, looking after Him, began to laugh softly like a man in love with God! Such a laugh I never heard! It made my ears drunk. It was like wine. And though I was half-dead with fright I found myself laughing, too!

MIRIAM (*with beseeching summons*). Lazarus, come forth!

CHORUS OF WOMEN (*chanting*). Lazarus! Come forth!

CROWD (*on either side of the house—echo the chant*). Come forth! Come forth!

LAZARUS (*suddenly in a deep voice—with a wonderful exultant acceptance in it*). Yes!

(*The Guests in the room, the Crowds outside all cry out in fear and joy and fall on their knees.*)

CHORUS OF WOMEN (*chanting exultantly*).

The stone is taken away!

The spirit is loosed!

The soul let go!

LAZARUS (*rising and looking around him at everyone and everything—with an all embracing love—gently*). Yes!

(*His family and the GUESTS in the room now throng about LAZARUS to embrace him. The CROWDS of men and women on each side push into the room to gaze at him. He is in the arms of his MOTHER and MIRIAM while his SISTERS and*

FATHER *try to kiss and press his hands. The five are half hysterical with relief and joy, sobbing and laughing.*)

MIRIAM. Lazarus!

MOTHER. Lazarus!

SISTERS. Lazarus!

FATHER. Lazarus!

CROWD *(in a great echoing cry)*. Lazarus!

FATHER. My son is reborn to me! Hozannah!

ALL *(with a great shout)*. Hozannah!

FATHER. Let us rejoice! Eat and drink! Draw up your chairs, friends! Music! Bring wine!

(Music begins in the room off right, rear—a festive dance tune. The company take their places, the FATHER and MOTHER at LAZARUS' right and left, MIRIAM next to the MOTHER, MARTHA and MARY beside the FATHER. But LAZARUS remains standing. Wine is poured and all raise their goblets toward LAZARUS—then suddenly they stop, the music dies out, and an awed and frightened stillness prevails for LAZARUS is a strange, majestic figure whose understanding smile now seems terrible and enigmatic to the CROWD.)

FATHER *(pathetically uneasy)*. You frighten us, my son. You are strange—standing there—— *(In the midst of a silence more awkward and awed than before, he rises to his feet, goblet in hand.)* A toast, neighbors!

ALL *(in a forced echo)*. A toast!

FATHER. To my son, Lazarus, whom a blessed miracle has brought back from Death!

LAZARUS *(suddenly—in a great exultant voice)*. No! There is no death!

(A moment's pause. The people remain with goblets up-lifted staring at him. Then all repeat after him questioningly and frightenedly.)

ALL. There—is—no—death?

6TH GUEST *(suddenly blurts out the question which is in the minds of all)*. What did you find beyond there, Lazarus? *(A pause of silence.)*

LAZARUS *(smiles gently and speaks as if to a group of*

inquisitive children). O Curious Greedy Ones, is not one world in which you know not how to live enough for you?

6TH GUEST (*emboldened*). Why did you say "Yes," Lazarus?

4TH GUEST. Why did you laugh?

ALL THE GUESTS (*with insistent curiosity—but in low awed tones*). What is beyond there, Lazarus?

CHORUS OF WOMEN (*in a low murmur*). What is beyond there?

CROWD (*carrying the question softly back into silence*). What is beyond?

LAZARUS (*suddenly again—in a ringing voice of exultation*). There is only Life! Stars and Dust! Eternal Laughter!

(*He begins to laugh, softly at first—a laugh so full of a complete acceptance of life, a profound assertion of joy in living, so devoid of all self-consciousness or fear, that it is like a great bird song triumphant in depths of sky, proud and powerful, infectious with love, casting on the listener an enthralling spell. The CROWD in the room are caught by it. Glancing sideways at one another, smiling foolishly and self-consciously, at first they hesitate, plainly holding themselves in for fear of what the next one will think.*)

CROWD (*in a chanting murmur*).

Lazarus laughs!

What happiness!

Our hearts grow happy!

Lazarus laughs! Ha-ah——!

Laughter like music!

Like the wind!

Like waves of the sea!

Spring calls from the earth!

Summer sings in the air!

Lazarus laughs!

Ha-ah-ah-ah!

CHORUS OF WOMEN (*chanting*).

Lazarus laughs!

There is no death!

Fear is no more!

Fear is no more!

Ha-ah-ah-ah! Ha-ah-ah-ah!

(They laugh in a rhythmic cadence dominated by the laughter of Lazarus.)

CROWD *(who, gradually, coming in by groups or one by one, have now all begun to laugh in rhythm with the CHORUS OF WOMEN—in a great, full-throated pean as the laughter of LAZARUS rises higher and higher).*

Ha-ah-ah-ah! Ha-ah-ah-ah!

Fear is no more!

There is no death!

LAZARUS *(on a final note of exultance).* There is only God's Eternal Laughter! Death is dead!

CROWD *(led by the CHORUS OF WOMEN).*

Ha-ah-ah-ah!

Death is dead!

There is only God!

There is only laughter!

Hozannah! Hozannah!

Ha-ah-ah-ah!

Ha-ah-ah-ah!

(The music plays again. The room rocks, the air outside throbs with the rhythmic beat of their liberated laughter, still a bit uncertain of its freedom, harsh, discordant, frenzied, desperate and drunken, but dominated and inspired by the high, free, aspiring, exulting laughter of Lazarus.)

CURTAIN

SCENE 2.

SCENE: *Some months later. Exterior of LAZARUS' home in Bethany, now known as the House of Laughter. It is a clear bright night, the sky sparkling with stars. At the extreme front is a road. Between this and the house is a small raised terrace. The house is low, of one story only, its walls white. Four windows are visible with a closed door in the middle of the wall. Steps lead up to this door, and to*

the left of door a flight of stairs goes up to the balustraded roof. The windows shine brilliantly with the flickering light of many candles which gives them a throbbing starlike effect. From within comes the sound of flutes and dance music. The dancers can be seen whirling swiftly by the windows. There is continually an overtone of singing laughter emphasizing the pulsing rhythm of the dance.

On the road in the foreground, left and right, two crowds of Jews, each composed equally of men and women, masked and costumed as in Scene One, are gathered. In the front ranks four of the individualized SEVEN GUESTS of Scene One may be recognized—two in the Periods of Manhood and Middle Age with the Nazarenes, two in Maturity and Old Age with the Orthodox. There are now only thirty-three men and women in each group, sixty-six in all, as opposed to the eighty-four of Scene One. The remaining eighteen, nine of each sex, have become FOLLOWERS OF LAZARUS and are the dancers in the house. These comprise the Boys and Girls, Youths and Maidens, and Young Men and Women of the Simple, Humble Type, the Happy, Loving Type, and the Proud, Defiant Type. The followers of Christ—the Nazarenes—among whom may be noted MARTHA and MARY—are on the left; the Orthodox, among whom are LAZARUS' FATHER and MOTHER and a PRIEST, are at right. Between the two hostile groups is the same CHORUS OF WOMEN, wearing their double-sized masks, in a formation like a spearhead, whose point, placed at the foot of the steps leading to the terrace, is the LEADER, (Old Age in the Sorrowful, Resigned Type) with three Nazarenes on the left side and three Orthodox on the right. These latter are all of the Mature Age (6) and of the Types 3, 5, and 6—that is, the Self-Tortured and Melancholy, the Envious and Hypocritical, and the Revengeful and Cruel. The three Christian members are all of the Middle Age (4) and of the same Types 3, 5 and 6 as the Orthodox crowd. All these people are staring fascinatedly at the house, listening entranced, their feet moving, their bodies swaying to the music's beat, stiffly, constrainedly,

compelled against their wills. Then the music suddenly stops and the chant of youthful voices is heard.)

FOLLOWERS OF LAZARUS (*from within the house*).

Ha-ah-ah-ah!

There is only Life!

Only Laughter!

Ha-ah-ah-ah! Ha-ah-ah-ah!

CHORUS OF WOMEN (*as if they were subjects moved by hypnotic suggestion—miserably*).

Ha-ah-ah-ah!

There is only Laughter!

Ha-ah-ah——

CROWD (*in the same manner*). Ha-ah-ah——

MARY. Ha-ah—— (*Then frantically—half weeping with indignant rage—to the Nazarenes*) Stop! Oh, how can we laugh! We are betraying Jesus! My brother has become a devil!

THE ORTHODOX PRIEST (*his mask that of a religious bigot of the Cruel, Revengeful Type of Old Age*). Ha-ah—— (*Tearing his beard and stamping with rage*). Stop it, you fools! It is a foul sin in the sight of Jehovah! Why do you come here every night to listen, and watch their abominations? You are all possessed! Beware of the wrath! The Lord God will punish!

MARY (*echoing him—to her people*). The Lord, Jesus, will never forgive.

THE ORTHODOX PRIEST (*angrily*). Jesus? (*He turns to look at the Nazarenes disdainfully and spits on the ground insultingly*). Pshaw! No matter where one goes one finds these ragged curs of Nazarenes!

(*The members of the two groups begin to glare at each other, the CHORUS OF WOMEN divides on each side leaving their leader before the steps alone.*)

A NAZARENE (*the 4TH GUEST of Scene One. In the same tone*). Comrades, I ask you, why is it not possible to congregate peacefully without being annoyed by the snarling of Pharisees!

AN ORTHODOX JEW (*the 6TH GUEST of Scene One—tauntingly*). Do you hear him, friends? These renegades

will soon deny they are Jews at all! Soon they will claim to be Romans!

PRIEST. And they will worship in filthy idolatry the sun and stars and earth and man's body—as Lazarus in there, (*points to the house*)—the disciple of their Jesus, has set them the example!

(*This is followed by an outburst of insulting shouts of accusation and denial and counter-accusation from both sides.*)

A NAZARENE (*the 4th GUEST of Scene One*). You lie! We despise his impiety as much as you!

ANOTHER NAZARENE. Lazarus is no disciple! He is a traitor to Jesus! We scorn him!

PRIEST (*sneeringly*). But your pretended Messiah did not scorn him, since according to your stupid lies he raised him from the dead! (*Another chorus of hoots and jeers.*) All right! You howl like dogs, but answer me, has your Jesus ever denied Lazarus, or denounced his laughter? (*Howls from everyone. His voice rises frenziedly.*) No, he has never said one word and no doubt he is laughing, too, at all you credulous fools, for if Lazarus is not his disciple, at least in the matter of the false miracle he was his accomplice!

(*This provokes a frightful outcry, penetrated by a piercing scream from LAZARUS' MOTHER, who, unable to bear more, falls fainting to the ground. The FATHER bends over her. The group falls back from them. With frightened cries MARTHA and MARY run over from the group of Nazarenes and kneel beside her.*)

FATHER (*pitifully*). Rachel! Darling! Speak to me!

MARTHA (*practically*). She has only fainted.

MARY. She is opening her eyes! Mother, dear!

FATHER (*overjoyed*). Mother!

MOTHER (*weakly*). Father! Did I fall? (*Recognizing Martha and Mary*) Martha—and Mary—my dear ones—(*They embrace her, weeping*) I have not seen you since you left home to follow that Jesus—but I will not speak of that—I am too happy to kiss you again. If we

were only now all at home—and if, also, my poor boy, Lazarus—— (*she sobs*)

FATHER (*gruffly*). You must not speak his name!

MARTHA. Do not worry your head about Lazarus. He is not worth it!

MARY (*with surprising vindictiveness*). He is accursed! He has betrayed our Lord!

PRIEST (*to those around him—mockingly*). Do you hear? They already call the Nazarene “Lord.” A Lord who is in the common prison at Jerusalem, I heard today! A fine Lord whom our High Priests have had arrested like a thief!

MARY (*with fanatic fervor*). He is a King! Whenever he chooses a great army will be gathered round him and he will seize his kingdom and all who deny him shall be crucified!

PRIEST (*tauntingly*). Now their jail-bird is a king, no less! Soon they will make him a God—as the Romans do their Caesars! They forswear the Jehovah of their fathers to ape the pagans!

MARY (*her eyes flashing*). He is the Messiah!

PRIEST (*furiously*). The Messiah! May Jehovah smite you in your lies! Step back among your kind! You defile us! (*As she stands defiantly he appeals to the Father.*) Have you no authority? She called him the Messiah—that common beggar, that tramp! Curse her!

FATHER (*confused, pitifully harried, collecting his forces*). Wait. Go back, Mary! You chose to leave our home—to follow that impostor—

MARY (*defiantly*). The Messiah!

MARTHA (*trying to calm her*). Sssh! Remember, he is our father!

MARY (*fanatically*). I deny him! I deny all who deny Jesus!

MOTHER (*tearfully*). And me, darling?

MARY. You must come to us, Mother! You must believe in Jesus and leave all to follow him!

FATHER (*enraged*). So! You must steal your Mother away—to leave me lonely in my old age——!

MOTHER. No, no, Father! I will never leave you!

FATHER. You are an unnatural daughter! I disown you! Go before I curse——

MOTHER (*beseechingly*). Father!

MARTHA (*pulling Mary away*). Mary! Jesus teaches to be kind.

MARY (*hysterically*). To give up all and follow him! I want to give him everything! I want my Father to curse me!

FATHER (*frenziedly*). Then I do curse you! No—not you—but the devil in you!—and the devil in Martha!—and the great mocking devil that dwells in Lazarus and laughs from his mouth! I curse these devils and that Prince of Devils, that false prophet, Jesus! It is he who has brought division to my home and many homes that were happy before. I curse him! I curse the day he called my good son Lazarus from the grave to walk again with a devil inside him! It was not my son who came back but a devil! My son is dead! And you, my daughters, are dead! I am the father only of devils! (*His voice has risen to a wailing lament*) My children are dead!

The Voice of LAZARUS (*rings from within the house in an exultant denial that is half a chant*). There is no death! (*LAZARUS laughs and the voices of his FOLLOWERS take up the refrain.*)

FOLLOWERS OF LAZARUS. Ha-ah-ah-ah! Ha-ah-ah-ah! (*They pour in a laughing rout from the doorway on to the terrace. At the same moment there appear on the roof and form along the balustrade their CHORUS OF SEVEN in the double-sized masks of two Types apiece for each of the three Periods before Manhood, and one additional, the Leader, in the Age of Manhood of the Proud, Defiant Type. There are four males, including the Leader, and three females in this Chorus.*)

FOLLOWERS OF LAZARUS.

Ha-ah-ah-ah! Ha-ah-ah-ah!

(*The music continues to come from within. Laughing, the Followers dance to it in weaving patterns on the terrace. They are dressed in bright-colored, diaphanous*

robes. *Their chorused laughter, now high and clear, now dying to a humming murmur, stresses the rhythmic flow of the dance. Their masks retain the recognizable characteristics of the Types 2 and 4 in the three Youngest Periods, but they are now all stamped with the expression of LAZARUS' message—a radiant look of fearless faith in life. Their mouths are shaped by laughter.*)

CROWD (*the two groups, on the appearance of the Followers, immediately forget their differences and form into one mob, giving one united howl of rage against them*). Yaah! Idolators! Pagans! Traitors! Perjurers! Yaah! (*But they cannot keep it up. The music and laughter rise above their hooting. They fall into silence. Then they again begin to feel impelled by the rhythm and laughter, their feet move, their bodies sway, their lips quiver, their mouths open as if to laugh.*)

PRIEST (*his mouth twitching—fighting against the compulsion in him—stammers*). Brothers—listen—we must unite—in one cause—we cannot permit—to—exist—(*It is as if he can no longer control his speech. He presses his hand over his mouth convulsively.*)

AN AGED JEW (*the 7TH GUEST of Scene One—starts to harangue the crowd. He fights the spell but cannot control his jerking body nor his ghastly, spasmodic laughter*). Neighbors! Our young people are corrupted! They are leaving our farms—to dance and sing! To laugh! Ha—! Laugh at everything! Ha-ah—! (*He struggles desperately to control himself.*)

CROWD (*a barking laugh forced from them*). Ha—!

THE AGED JEW. They have no respect for life! When I said in kindness, "You must go back to work," they laughed at me! Ha—! "We desire joy. We go to Lazarus" they said—and left my fields! I begged them to stay—with tears in my eyes! I even offered them more money! They laughed! Ha-ah—! "What is money? Can the heart eat gold?" They laughed at money! Ha-ah—! (*He chokes with exasperated rage.*)

CROWD (*echoing his feeling*). Ha-ah—!

AGED JEW (*shaking his fist at LAZARUS' Followers*).

That loafer taught them that! They come to him and work for nothing! For nothing! And they are glad, these undutiful ones! While they sow, they dance! They sing to the earth when they are ploughing! They tend his flocks and laugh toward the sun! Ha-ah-ah—! (*He struggles again.*)

CROWD (*as before*). Ha-ah-ah—!

AGED JEW. How can we compete with labor for laughter! We will have no harvest. There will be no food! Our children will starve! Our race will perish! And he will laugh at us! Ha-ah-ah-ah! (*He howls with furious, uncontained laughter.*)

CHORUS OF WOMEN (*bitterly denouncing LAZARUS*).

Our children will starve!

Our race will perish!

Lazarus laughs at us!

Ha-ah-ah-ah!

CROWD (*catching their tone*). Ha-ah-ah-ah! Ha-ah-a-ah! (*Their former distinctions of Nazarenes and Orthodox are now entirely forgotten. The family of LAZARUS is grouped in the center as if nothing had ever happened to separate them. The CHORUS OF WOMEN is again joined in its spearhead formation at the stairs. A queer excitement begins to pervade this mob. They begin to weave in and out, from right to left, clasping each others' hands now and then, moving mechanically in jerky steps to the music in a grotesque sort of marionettes' country dance. At first this is slow but it momentarily becomes more hectic and peculiar. They raise clenched fists or hands, distended into threatening talons. Their voices sound thick and harsh with anger as they mutter, each one aloud to himself or herself, exclamations or phrases of obloquy and oburgation.*) Atheist! Idolater! He has no God! He betrayed Jesus! The Lord will punish! Jehovah will smite! He worships the sun! He adores the stars! He prays to the earth! Pagan! Blasphemer! Ha-ah-ah-ah!

CHORUS OF WOMEN (*threateningly now*).

Jehovah will smite!

The Lord will punish!

Beware, O Lazarus!

Ha-ah-ah-ah!

CROWD (*ever more excited*). Ha-ah-ah-ah! See them dance! Half-naked! Shameless! Wanton music! Dirty! Evil! Music of whores! Infamous! Bestial! Mad! Blood! Adultery! Murder! We rape! We burn! We crucify! Ha-ah-ah-ah! (*This last in a wild frenzy.*)

CHORUS OF WOMEN (*frenziedly*).

Ha-ah-ah-ah!

We rape! We burn!

Ha-ah-ah-ah!

We crucify!

CROWD. We crucify! We crucify!

Ha-ah-ah-ah!

Ha-ah—!

(*They crowd toward the gateway, their faces turned, their arms stretched out to LAZARUS' FOLLOWERS as if demanding him for a sacrificial victim. Meanwhile they never cease to hop up and down, to mill around, to twist their bodies toward and away from each other in bestial parody of the dance of the FOLLOWERS.*)

(*The tall figure of LAZARUS, dressed in a white robe, suddenly appears on the roof of the house. He stands at the balustrade in the middle of his CHORUS. Beside him, a little behind, MIRIAM appears, dressed in black, her face upturned, her lips praying. She appears to have grown older, to be over forty now. LAZARUS' body is clearly illumined by its own inner light. The change in him is marked. He seems ten years younger, at the prime of forty. His body has become less angular and stiff. His movements are graceful and pliant. The change is even more noticeable in his face, which has filled out, become purer in outline, more distinctly Grecian. His complexion is the red-brown of rich earth, the grey in his black, curly hair and beard has almost disappeared.*)

(*The music ceases. His FOLLOWERS remain fixed in their dancing attitudes like figures in a frieze. Each member of the mob remains still in the distorted posture he had been*

in when LAZARUS appeared. He looks down at the mob pityingly, his face calm and pure.)

LAZARUS (*speaks amid a profound silence. His voice releases his own dancers and the mob from their fixed attitudes. The music begins to play again within the house, very soft and barely audible, swelling up and down like the sound of an organ from a distant church*). You laugh, but your laughter is guilty. It laughs a hyena laughter, spotted, howling its hungry fear of life! That day I returned did I not tell you your fear was no more, that there is no death? You believed then—for a moment! You laughed—discordantly, hoarsely, but with a groping toward innocence! What! Have you so soon forgotten that happiness that now your laughter curses life again as of old? (*He pauses.*) That is your tragedy! You forget! You forget the God in you. You wish to forget! Remembrance would imply the high duty to live as a Son of God—generously—with love—with pride—with laughter! This is too glorious a victory for you, too terrible a loneliness! Easier to forget, to become only a man, the son of a sad woman, to hide from the light against her breast, to whimper your fear to her resigned heart and be comforted by her resignation! You begin life by denying it. But thus the fear of Death is born in you—twin brother to your fear of Life! Death becomes for you a bitter reckoning to be evaded for a lifetime! Evaded by blaming God, Fate, demons, nature or your grandmother for your cowardice! Man becomes ridiculous in his evasions, and the more ridiculous he grows the more solemn and wise he acts! Acts! Man, a son of God, becomes at last an actor! (*LAZARUS suddenly smiles at them with ironical humor.*) O comedians, if you could only hope to hear the audience applaud your death scene, with what a brave flourish of your wooden swords would you not die! (*He chuckles*) But perhaps they would not applaud. Their envy might keep them silent, for are they not all—your fellow actors? (*He laughs gaily, joyously, throwing his head back. An echo of his laughter comes gaily from his FOLLOWERS, spreads to the CHORUS OF WOMEN and from them uncertainly dies out in the crowd itself.*)

CHORUS OF LAZARUS' FOLLOWERS (*followed by all the FOLLOWERS*). Ha-ah-ah-ah!

CHORUS OF WOMEN. Ha-ah-ah-ah!

CROWD. Ha-ah—

LAZARUS (*exaltedly—his eyes on the stars*). Why are your eyes always fixed on the ground in weariness of thought, or watching one another with suspicion? Throw your gaze upward! To life! To the fearless and deathless! The everlasting! To the stars! (*He stretches out his arms to the sky*) Oh stars, whose song I hear through space deep-flowing under silence, teach man thy song that it may melt his frozen darkness into bestowing light!

Oh brothers in God, weaving dance rhythms of eternal peace to the lonely drum of Time, laugh thine everlasting laughter! Let it descend on man's seared lips that suck for life at the dry breasts of Death!

Oh brothers, sons of eternal life, celebrants of its flaming revel along the mountain ridges of infinity, let man feel thine ecstasy that he may evoke his own high freedom in the Oneness of the Dust!

(*He finishes, dropping his hands to his sides but keeping his face upturned. The CROWD are motionless, spellbound with awe, their eyes fixed like his on the stars. It is as if they were all waiting for a message from heaven. Suddenly he points upward, with exaltation*) See! A new star has appeared! It is the one that shone over Bethlehem! (*His voice becomes a little bitter and mocking*) The Master of Peace and Love has departed this earth. Let all stars be for you henceforth symbols of past Saviors—Sons of God who appeared on worlds like ours to tell a saving truth to ears like yours, inexorably deaf! (*Then exaltedly*) But the greatness of Saviors is that they cannot save! The greatness of man is that no God can save him—until he becomes a God! (*He stars up at the stars, rapt in contemplation, oblivious to all around him now.*)

(*Rapidly approaching from the left a man's voice jarring in high-pitched cruel laughter is heard. They all listen, huddled together like sheep.*)

MESSENGER (3RD GUEST of Scene One). Great news! The Nazarene has been crucified!

PRIEST (*with fierce triumph*). Jehovah is avenged! Hozannah!

ORTHODOX (*led by the PRIEST—with fierce triumph*). Hozannah! The false prophet is dead! The pretended Messiah is dead! (*They jump and dance, embracing one another. The NAZARENES stand paralyzed and stunned.*)

MARY (*in a frenzy of grief*). Do not believe him! He could not die! (*But at this moment a Nazarene youth, exhausted by grief and tears, staggers in from the left. The NAZARENES cry with alarm.*)

MESSENGER (2ND GUEST of Scene One). Jesus is dead! Our Lord is murdered! (*He sinks on his knees sobbing. All the NAZARENES do likewise, wailing, rending their garments, tearing their hair, some even beating their heads on the ground in the agony of their despair.*)

MARY (*insane with rage now*). They have murdered him! (*To her followers—savagely*) An eye for an eye! Revenge the Master! (*Their frenzy of grief turned into rage, the NAZARENES leap to their feet threateningly. Concealed swords and knives are brought out by both sides.*)

MIRIAM (*leaning over the balustrade—in a voice of entreaty*). Mary! Brothers! (*But none heed her or seem to see her. And LAZARUS remains oblivious to men, his arms upstretched toward the stars as are those of all his FOLLOWERS.*)

MARY (*wildly*). Vengeance! Death to his murderers!

PRIEST (*fiercely to his followers*). Death to the Nazarenes!

(*With cries of rage the two groups rush on one another. There is a confused tumult of yells, groans, curses, the shrieks of women, the sounds of blows, as they meet in a pushing, whirling, struggling mass in which individual figures are indistinguishable. Knives and swords flash above the heads of the mass, hands in every tense attitude of striking, clutching, tearing are seen upraised. As the fight is at its height a Roman Centurion and a squad of eight soldiers come tramping up at the double-quick. They wear*

the masks of Romans. These Roman masks now and henceforth in the play are carried out according to the identical formula of Seven Periods, Seven Types, as those of the Jews seen previously, except that the basis of each face is Roman—heavy, domineering, self-complacent, the face of a confident dominant race. The CENTURION differs from his soldiers only, as before with the JEWISH GUESTS, in being more individualized. He is middle-aged, his SOLDIERS belong to the ages of Young Manhood and Manhood.)

CENTURION (shouts commandingly). Disperse! (But no one hears him—With angry disgust to his soldiers) Charge! (The soldiers form a wedge and charge with a shout. They soon find it necessary to use their swords, and strike down everyone in their way.)

MIRIAM. Mercy, Romans! (As they pay no attention to her, in desperation she embraces LAZARUS beseechingly, forcing his attention back to earth) Lazarus! Lazarus!

LAZARUS (looks down upon the struggling mass and cries in a ringing voice). Hold!

(Each person stands transfixed, frozen in the last movement, even the ROMAN SOLDIERS and the CENTURION himself. Ten dead and mortally wounded lie on the ground, trampled by the feet of friend and foe alike. LAZARUS looks at the crowd. To each he seems to look at him or her alone. His eyes are accusing, stern, proud, aloof. The heads of all are averted. Even the CENTURION stares at the ground humbly, in spite of himself. Finally LAZARUS speaks in a voice of infinite disdain) Sometimes it is hard to laugh—even at men! (He turns his eyes from them, staring straight before him. This seems to release them from their fixed positions. The NAZARENES and the ORTHODOX separate and slink guiltily apart. The CHORUS forms again, their leader at the center of the steps as before. A low wail of lamentation arises from each group. The CHORUS takes this up and makes it articulate.)

CHORUS OF WOMEN.

Woe unto us!

Woe unto Israel!

Woe unto thee, Jerusalem!

O divided house
 Thou shalt crumble to dust
 And swine shall root
 Where thy Temple stood!
 Woe unto Israel!
 Woe unto us!

CROWD. Woe, woe unto us.

CENTURION (*gruffly, to hide his embarrassment at being awed by LAZARUS*). Here you! Drag your carcasses away!

(*From each side men and women come forward to identify and mourn their dead. The low wail of lamentations rises and falls. The CENTURION looks up at LAZARUS—harshly*)
 You, there! Are you he whom they call the Laughter Lazarus?

LAZARUS (*without looking at him—as if from a dream, his voice seeming to come from some distance within*). I am Lazarus.

CENTURION. Who is said to have been brought back from death by enchantment?

LAZARUS (*in a quiet tone of deep peace*). There is no death!

FOLLOWERS (*echoing his tone*). There is no death.

AN ORTHODOX MAN (*bending beside the body of LAZARUS' FATHER*). Here is your father, Lazarus. He is dead.

AN ORTHODOX WOMAN. This is your mother, Lazarus. She is dead.

A NAZARENE. Here is your sister, Martha, Lazarus. She is dead.

A NAZARENE WOMAN. And this is Mary, Lazarus. She is dead.

MIRIAM (*suddenly—with deep grief*). And He who was the Son of Man, who loved you and gave you life again has died, Lazarus—has died!

LAZARUS (*in a great triumphant voice*). Yes! Yes!! Yes!!! Men die! Even a Son of Man must die to show men that Man may live! But there is no death!

CENTURION (*at first in a tone of great awe—to his soldiers*). Is he a God? (*Then gruffly, ashamed of his ques-*

tion) Come down, Jew! I have orders to bring you back to Rome to Caesar!

LAZARUS (*as if he were answering not the CENTURION but the command of his fate from the sky*). Yes! (*He walks down the narrow stairs and, Miriam following him, comes down the path to the road. He goes and kneels for a moment beside the bodies of his FATHER, MOTHER and SISTERS and kisses each in turn on the forehead. For a moment the struggle with his grief can be seen in his face—then he looks up to the stars and, as if answering a question, again says simply*). Yes! (*Then exultantly*) Yes!! (*And begins to laugh from the depths of his exalted spirit. The laughter of his FOLLOWERS echoes his. The music and dancing begin again.*)

(*The CENTURION grins sheepishly. The SOLDIERS chuckle. The CENTURION laughs awkwardly, compelled. The SOLDIERS laugh. The music from the house and laughter from the FOLLOWERS grow louder. The infection spreads to the CHORUS OF WOMEN whose swaying grief falls into the rhythm of the music as does that of the mourners.*)

LAZARUS' FOLLOWERS. Ha-ah-ah-ah! Ha-ah-ah-ah!

CHORUS OF WOMEN (*torn by the conflict—torturedly*).

Ha-ah-ah-ah!

Woe to us, woe!

Ha-ah-ah-ah!

CROWD (*beside the bodies*).

Woe to us, woe!

Ha-ah-ah-ah!

CENTURION. Ha-ah-ah-ah! You are brave, you Laughter! Remember Tiberius never laughs! And boast not to Caesar there is no death—or he will invent a new one for you!

LAZARUS (*with a smile*). All death is—man's invention! (*He laughs and the CENTURION and SOLDIERS laugh with him, half dancing clumsily now to the beat of the music.*)

CENTURION and SOLDIERS. Ha-ah-ah-ah! There is no death!

CHORUS OF LAZARUS' FOLLOWERS.

Only Life!

Only Laughter!

Ha-ah-ah-ah! Ha-ah-ah-ah!

ALL THE FOLLOWERS (*dancing*).

Ha-ah-ah-ah!

Death is dead!

CHORUS OF WOMEN (*forgetting their grief—their eyes on LAZARUS now, their arms outstretched to him as are those of the crowd grouped around the bodies but forgetting them*).

Ha-ah-ah-ah!

Death is dead!

CROWD. Ha-ah-ah-ah! Ha-ah-ah-ah!

CENTURION (*to his laughing SOLDIERS*). Forward! Ha-ah-ah-ah! (*They tramp dancing off. LAZARUS and MIRIAM start to follow.*)

MIRIAM (*suddenly pointing to his FOLLOWERS who are dancing and laughing obliviously—pityingly*). But your faithful ones who love you, Lazarus?

LAZARUS. This is their test. Their love will follow—or it will forget. Come! (*With a last gesture back like a blessing on all he is leaving, he goes. The laughter of the soldiers recedes. That of the CHORUS OF WOMEN and the CROWD falters and breaks into lamenting grief again, guilt-stricken because of its laughter.*)

CHORUS OF WOMEN.

Ha-ah-ah-ah!

Ha-ah— But woe!

There lie our dead!

Oh shame and guilt!

Forgetting our dead

The sin of laughter

Corrupts our hearts!

CROWD (*with fierce remorseful grief*).

Woe to us, woe!

There lie our dead!

CHORUS OF LAZARUS' FOLLOWERS (*their voices and the music growing more and more hesitating and faint*).

Ha-ah-ah-ah! Ha-ah-ah-ah!

Only life!

Only—

Ha-ah—

(*Their dance faltering and slow now.*)

Only Life!

Death is—

Ha-ah—

(*The music and dancing and voices cease. The lights in the windows, which have been growing dim, go out. There is a second of complete, death-like silence. The mourning folk in the foreground are frozen figures of grief. Then a sudden swelling chorus of forlorn bewilderment, a cry of lost children comes from the CHORUS OF FOLLOWERS and the FOLLOWERS themselves. They huddle into groups on the roof and on the terrace. They stretch their arms out in every direction supplicatingly.*)

CHORUS OF FOLLOWERS.

Oh Lazarus, laugh!

Do not forsake us

Where is thy love fled?

Where is thy laughter?

Give back thy laughter

Thy fearless laughter

Ere we forget!

ALL THE FOLLOWERS.

Give back thy laughter!

Ere we forget!

CHORUS OF FOLLOWERS (*with dull, resigned terror*).

Death slinks out

Of his grave in the heart!

Ghosts of fear

Creep back in the brain!

A FOLLOWER (*the BOY GUEST of Scene One—after a pause of silence—suddenly*). I remember! I will follow! Ha-ah-ah-ah! (*Forcing his laughter bravely, he runs off left.*)

CHORUS OF FOLLOWERS (*wailing hopelessly now*).

Forgotten is laughter!

We remember

Only death!

Fear is God!

Forgotten is laughter!

Life is death!

ALL THE FOLLOWERS.

Forgotten is laughter!

Life is death!

ALL (*the* CHORUS OF WOMEN *and the* CROWD *joining in*).

Life is a fearing,

A long dying,

From birth to death.

God is a slayer!

Life is death!

CURTAIN

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

NATHAN ASCH was born in 1902 in Warsaw, Poland; educated abroad and at Columbia and Syracuse Universities. Has contributed to *The Nation*, the *New York Evening Post*, the *Dial*, and *The Transatlantic Review*. He is the author of "The Office" (Harcourt Brace & Co.) and "Love in Chartres" (Albert & Charles Boni).

J. BROOKS ATKINSON was born in Melrose, Massachusetts, in 1894. He was graduated from Harvard, and was editor of the *New York Times Book Review*. Dramatic critic for *The New York Times*. He is the author of "Skyline Promenades" (Knopf).

JOSEPH WARREN BEACH was born in Gloversville, New York, in 1880. He is professor of English literature at the University of Minnesota. He is the author of "The Comic Spirit in George Meredith;" "The Method of Henry James;" "The Technique of Thomas Hardy;" "Meek Americans;" "The Outlook for American Prose." Contributor of poetry to various periodicals: *The Masses*, *Poetry*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *American Mercury*.

FLORENCE BECKER was born in New York in 1895. She received a B.S. from Columbia University.

WILFRID BENDALL was born in Stonebarrow Place, Dymock, Gloucestershire, England, in 1901. He went to Canada in 1912 and came to New York in 1921. He contributed to *Broom*.

LOUISE BOGAN was born in 1897 at Livermore Falls, Maine. She has lived in New York City since 1919; and has published one volume of verse, "Body of This Death" (McBride).

ALTER BRODY was born in Russia in 1895 and brought to America at the age of eight. He is the author of "A Family Album" (Viking Press) and has contributed poems, criticisms, and one-act plays to the magazines. "Loving in the Night" is part of a series of American-Yiddish plays in which he is attempting to transplant and naturalize the spirit and rhythm of Yiddish into English.

EDNA BRYNER was born in Tylersburg, Pennsylvania, and educated in the public schools of that state, and at Vassar

College. She has published stories in the *Dial*, *Bookman*, and the *Century*, two of which were republished in *O'Brien's Best Short Stories of the Year*, and she is the author of "Andy Brandt's Ark" (Dutton).

STANLEY BURNISHAW was born in New York City and educated in New York, Maine, and Pennsylvania. He is a B.A., University of Pittsburgh, and the author of "Poems" (Private Edition, Folio Press). His prose publications are: "New Hampshire" in "Modern Essays," edited by C. A. Cockayne, and reviews in *Voices*, *Forum*, *Poetry*, *Folio*, etc. His verse has been published in *Braithwaite's Anthology*, in the *Independent Anthology*, in *Palms*, *The Midland*, and *International*.

WITTER BYNNER was born in Brooklyn, August 10, 1881, and was graduated from Harvard. President, Poetry Society of America 1902-22. Associate Editor of *Palms*. He is the author of: "The New World," "Grenstone Poems," "A Canticle of Praise," "The Beloved Stranger," "A Canticle of Pan," "Pins for Wings" (under pseudonym Emanuel Morgan), and other books of verse and plays.

MARION CLINCH CALKINS was born in Wisconsin, and was graduated from the University of Wisconsin. She has done social work. For two years she was on the *Survey Graphic*. She is at present on leave from the University of Wisconsin, where she teaches in the department of History and Criticism of Art.

MORLEY CALLAGHAN was born in Toronto, Ontario, 1903. B.A. St. Michael's College, University of Toronto. He did newspaper work and is now studying law. He has published two stories, "Girl with Ambition," and "A Wedding Dress," in *This Quarter*; and has a novel forthcoming.

MALCOLM COWLEY was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and lives in New York. He has contributed to the *Dial* and is the translator of Valery's "Variety."

CLARKSON CRANE was born in Chicago in 1894 and was graduated from the University of California. He is the author of "The Western Shore."

HART CRANE was born in Garrettsville, Ohio, in 1899. His formal education was not continued beyond high school. Since then he has been employed as a mechanic, a clerk, a copywriter, etc. His first collection of verse, "White Buildings," was published by Boni & Liveright.

THOMAS CRAVEN was born at Salina, Kansas, in 1889. He is

the author of a novel, "Paint" (Harcourt, Brace & Co.), and for many years has contributed articles on the arts to the leading reviews.

BABETTE DEUTSCH was born in 1895 in New York City. She began to publish while a sophomore at Barnard; she is the author of two books of poetry, "Banners" and "Honey Out of the Rock." In 1926 she won the *Nation* Poetry Prize. With her husband, Avrahm Yarmolinsky, she has assembled and translated three books of foreign verse: "Modern Russian Poetry," "Contemporary German Poetry," and "An Anthology of Russian Verse." She is the author of two novels, "A Brittle Heaven" (Greenberg) and "In Such a Night" (John Day Co.).

GERTRUDE DIAMANT was born in New York in 1901. She has contributed short stories and articles to several magazines.

JOHN DOS PASSOS was born in Chicago, Illinois, in 1896. Besides contributing at various times to *The Masses*, the *Dial*, *Freeman*, *Asia*, and *New Masses*, he is the author of "One Man's Initiation," "Three Soldiers," "Rosinante to the Road Again," "A Pushcart at the Curb" (Verse), "Streets of Night," "Manhattan Transfer," "The Garbage Man" (Play) and "Orient Express," (Harper's).

FRANCES FLETCHER was born at Bridport, Vermont, in 1894; she received an A.B. from Vassar in 1914, and studied at several universities. Besides contributing to various magazines, she has published two books of poems, "The Banquet," and "A Boat of Glass."

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, January 3, 1886. Educated at Phillips Academy and Harvard College. Author of: "Fire and Wine," "Irradiations," "Sand and Spray," "Goblins and Pagodas," "Japanese Prints," "The Tree of Life," "Breakers and Granite," "Paul Gauguin, His Life and Art," "Preludes and Symphonies" and "Parables."

FRANCIS FERGUSON. (No biographical data available.)

LOUIS GILMORE was born in New Orleans in 1893. He was graduated from Columbia University. He has published in *The Little Review*, *Poetry*, *The Double Dealer*, *Broom*, *the New Yorker*, *Voices*, etc., and has appeared in the Best Poems of 1924 and 1925. He is Associate Editor of *The Double Dealer*.

MICHAEL GOLD was born on the East Side of New York in 1894. As a newspaper man, he has worked for about a dozen newspapers in various American cities. He edited the

Liberator in its latter days and helped re-establish the *New Masses*, and edited it for almost a year. He is one of the founders of the New Playwright's Theater. A book of his short stories, "The Damned Agitator," has been published in Moscow.

WALLACE GOULD was born in 1882 of Yankee stock. His poems have been published by *Others*, *The Dial*, *Broom*, and *The Little Review*.

PAUL GREEN, born in 1894, is the son of a farmer; after teaching country school he was graduated from the University of North Carolina and became assistant professor of philosophy there in 1923. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for the Best American Play of 1926.

LOUIS GRUDIN was born in 1899. He published "Charlatan." and ten copies of "Vaudeville" were issued privately. He is now at work on "A Primer for Aesthetes." He has been a contributor to *The Little Review*, *Broom*, *The Chap-book*, etc.

ROBERT SILLIMAN HILLYER was born at East Orange, New Jersey, in 1895, and educated at the Kent School, Harvard College, and University of Copenhagen. His books are: "Sonnets and Other Lyrics," "The Five Books of Youth," "Alchemy," "The Hills Give Promise," "The Coming Forth by Day," "The Halt in the Garden." In collaboration: "Eight Harvard Poets," "A Book of Danish Verse" (translations).

RAYMOND HOLDEN was born in New York City in 1894. He was educated in New York City and at Princeton University. He is the author of "Granite and Alabaster" (Macmillan) and another volume, "Linen to Flax," is to be published shortly. He was editor of *Travel Magazine* from 1923 to 1925.

ERNEST HEMINGWAY was born in 1896. He is an American who makes his home in Paris. His books are: "In Our Time" (Boni & Liveright) and "The Sun Also Rises" (Scribner's).

FREDERICK B. KAYE was born in New York City in 1892. His books are an edition of Bernard Mandeville's "Fable of the Bees" (Oxford: Clarendon Press) and (with R. S. Crane) *A Census of British Newspapers and Periodicals, 1620-1800*, (University of North Carolina Press). He has contributed to various scholarly and literary journals. He is associate professor of English at Northwestern University.

RICHARD KIRK. (No biographical data available.)

MANUEL KOMROFF was born in New York City in 1890. He has written the following books: "The Grace of Lambs," "The

Voice of Fire," "The Fantasy of Quest," and has edited: "The Travels of Marco Polo" and "Marco Polo's Contemporaries" (Boni & Liveright).

LOUIS KRONENBERGER was born in Cincinnati in 1904. He now lives in New York, and is associated with Boni & Liveright. He contributes poems, articles, and book reviews to various periodicals.

MARGERY LATIMER was born in Portage, Wisconsin, in 1899. First published in *The Reviewer*, she has also appeared in *The Echo*, *The Century*, and the *New Masses*. She will shortly appear in *Transition*.

MAURICE LESEMAN was born in Chicago in 1899. He has worked at carpentering, school teaching, and advertising; and poems of his have been awarded the Witter Bynner poetry prize and the Young Poets' prize given by *Poetry*. His poems have appeared in various magazines.

WILLIAM ELLERY LEONARD was born in Plainfield, New Jersey, in 1876. He graduated from Boston University, A.B. degree; A.M. Harvard University. He teaches at the University of Wisconsin. He is the author of "The Vaunt of Man," "The Lynching Bee," "Tutankamen and After," "Two Lives," and other books.

JANET LEWIS was born in Chicago in 1899. A group of her poems called "The Indians in the Woods" was printed by Monroe Wheeler in pamphlet form (*Mannikin* No. 1).

HANIEL LONG was born in Rangoon, Burma, in 1888; was graduated from Exeter and Harvard. He is now associate professor of English at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He has published "Poems" (Moffat, Yard) and "Notes for a New Mythology" (The Bookfellers).

ARCHIBALD MacLEISH was born at Glencoe, Illinois, in 1892, and besides publishing a volume of *Undergraduate Poetry* (Yale University Press) he has written the following books: "The Happy Marriage" (Houghton Mifflin), "The Pot of Earth" (Houghton Mifflin), "Nobodaddy" (Dunster House) and "Streets in the Moon" (Houghton Mifflin). In 1923 he gave up the practice of law and took up residence in Paris.

VIRGINIA MOORE was born in 1903. She took her A.B. at Hollins College, and her M.A. at Columbia. She is the author of "Not Poppy," a first volume of poetry; and has reviewed for many periodicals.

- EDWIN MORGAN was born in New York City in 1898. He has studied at the Sorbonne.
- DAVID O'NEIL was born in 1874 at St. Louis, Mo. Graduated from the St. Louis Law School. In 1917 he published "A Cabinet of Jade" and he has collaborated with Antrim Crawford on an anthology, "Today's Poetry."
- EUGENE O'NEIL was born in New York City thirty-seven years ago. He is the author of "Desire Under the Elms," "The Great God Brown," "The Fountain," and other plays (Boni & Liveright).
- GEORGE O'NEIL was born in St. Louis. He has published two books: "The Cobbler in Willow Street," and "The White Rooster" (Boni and Liveright).
- H. PHELPS PUTNAM was born in Boston in 1894. He was a student at Phillips Exeter Academy and at Yale College. He has been employed as a mining engineer, a historian, a foreign trader, an advertising manager, and an editor. A book of his poems, entitled "Trinc," is scheduled for early publication.
- CARL RAKOSI was born in Berlin, Germany, in 1903. He has contributed verse to *The Little Review*, *The Nation*, *New Masses*, *Two Worlds Quarterly*, and is to appear in *The Exile*.
- JOHN RIORDAN was born in Derby, Connecticut, in 1903. He took his B.S. at the Sheffield Scientific School (Yale) and has published in *The Little Review*.
- ELIZABETH MADDOX ROBERTS was born in Kentucky and was educated at the University of Chicago. She now lives in California. She is the author of "Under the Tree" and "The Time of Man" (Viking Press).
- DAVID ROSENTHAL was born at Vilna, Russia, in 1891. He came to the United States at the age of three. His poems have appeared in the old *Masses*, in *Others*, *Broom*, *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, *This Quarter*.
- WILLIAM SAPHIER was born in Roumania and lives in New York. He has contributed to *Poetry* and *The Double Dealer*.
- LYLE SAXON was born in Louisiana in 1891 and studied at the Louisiana State University. For eight years he was chief feature writer for the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*. He has contributed articles and short stories to *The Century*, *The New Republic*, *Dial*. His story "Cane River," was included in the O. Henry Memorial Prize stories for 1926.
- ISIDOR SCHNEIDER was born in Austria in 1896 and has lived in America since 1902. He completed his formal education

at the College of the City of New York. He is the author of "Dr. Transit" (Boni & Liveright); he has been contributor to *Poetry*, *Dial*, *Broom*, *Reedy's Mirror*, *Rhythmus*, *Forum*, etc.

HERBERT J. SELIGMANN was born in New York City in 1891. Harvard B.A. He has been a member of the staffs of *The New Republic*, *The Evening Post*, *The Globe*, and *The Tribune*; and is associated with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He is the author of "The Negro Faces America," and "D. H. Lawrence: an American Interpretation."

JAY G. SIGMUND was born near Waubeek, Linn County, Iowa, in 1885; he was educated in rural schools and in the Central City, Iowa, High School. He has published four volumes of verse, "Frescoes," "Pinions," "Land O'Maize Folk," and "Drowsy Ones," and one volume of short stories, "Wapsipinicon Tales."

WILLIAM SHEPARD. (No biographical data available.)

EDNA LOUISE SMITH was born in Colorado Springs, Colorado, in 1902. Her poems have been published in *Poetry*, *Forum*, *Poet Lore*, and *Poetry of Today*. She is at present Assistant Professor of French at Earlham College, and will shortly join the staff of Washington Square College, New York.

PHILIP EDWARD STEVENSON was born in New York City in 1896. He was educated at private schools, and studied for a year and a half at Harvard before participating in the War of 1914-1918, from which he is still convalescent. His stories have been published in *The Midland*, in the old *Metro-politan*, and other magazines.

JOSEPHINE STRONGIN was born in New York in 1909. The poems in *The AMERICAN CARAVAN* are the first she has published.

ALLEN TATE was born in 1899 in the South, where he was educated. He is a contributor of philosophical and critical essays to various journals in England and America.

GERTRUDE STEIN is a native of America who lives in Paris.

JENNINGS TOFEL was born in Russia and reared in America. At present, he is studying painting in Paris.

KATE M. TUCKER was born at Nyack, New York, in 1890. She was in editorial work for some years in New York, and at one time was connected with the Business and Professional Women's Clubs. Five years ago she moved to Cape Neddick,

on the coast of Maine, where she runs a farm and a small inn and writes.

JEAN STARR UNTERMEYER was born in Zanesville, Ohio; and was educated there, in the public schools, in the Putnam Seminary, and in Mrs. Kohut's School in New York, studying later at Columbia University. Her books are: "Growing Pains" (Huebsch) and "Dreams Out of Darkness" (Huebsch). Macmillan's are to publish her next book of poems, "Steep Ascent." She was one of the original group to publish *The Miscellany of American Poetry*. She now lives in Berlin.

LOUIS UNTERMEYER was born in New York, October 1, 1885. Educated at De Witt Clinton High School. He is the author of: "The Younger Quire," "First Love," "Challenge," "——— and Other Poets," "These Times," "The New Adam," "Heaven, a Book of Burlesque," "Roast Leviathan," "This Singing World" (Modern poems for children), "American Poetry since 1900." Translator or compiler: "Poems of Heinrich Heine," "Modern American Verse" (anthology), "Mass-Man" (translation of Toller's *Masse Mensch*), "The Fat of the Cat," adapted from the Swiss, 1925.

MARK VAN DOREN was born at Hope, Illinois, in 1894. He is the author of "The Poetry of John Dryden," "Spring Thunder and Other Poems," "7 P.M. and Other Poems," and "Edwin Arlington Robinson." He is literary editor of *The Nation*.

ROBERT PENN WARREN. (No biographical data available.)

ERIC WALROND was born in British Guiana, in 1898. When he was eight his parents moved to the West Indies, and thence to Panama. On the Isthmus he went to public and private schools and worked as cub reporter. He came to New York at twenty, and while undertaking a variety of odd jobs he studied at the College of the City of New York and Columbia University. His book of short stories, "Tropic Death," is published by Boni & Liveright.

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS was born in Rutherford, New Jersey, in 1883, was graduated from the University of Pennsylvania Medical School, and has practiced medicine in Rutherford ever since then. His books are: "The Tempers" (Elkin Mathews), "Al Que Quiere," "Kora in Hell," "Improvisations," "Sour Grapes" (The Four Seas Company), "Spring and All" (The Contact Publishing Co.), "The Great American Novel" (The Three Mountains Press) and "In the American Grain" (A. & C. Boni). He received the *Dial* Award for 1926.

EDMUND WILSON was born at Red Bank, New Jersey, in 1895; was graduated from Princeton in 1916; was managing editor of *Vanity Fair*, and is now an editor of *The New Republic*. He published, in collaboration with John Peale Bishop, "The Undertaker's Garland;" and a book of dialogues and plays, "Discordant Encounters" (A. & C. Boni).

YVOR WINTERS was born in Chicago, in 1900, and has spent most of his life west of that city. He has been a dairy hand, a stenographer, a breeder of Airedales, a school teacher, and a university instructor. He is the author of two booklets of verse: "The Immobile Wind" (Monroe Wheeler) and "The Magpie's Shadow" (Musterbookhouse), and he is now publishing his third volume, "The Bare Hills" (Four Seas Publishing Co.).

AVRAHM YARMOLINSKY was born in 1890 in Russia and transplanted to these States the year before the War. He has done into English several Russian books, notably "The Memoirs of Count Witte." In collaboration with Babette Deutsch he edited and translated "Modern Russian Poetry," "Contemporary German Poetry," "An Anthology of Russian Verse." He has published articles on Russian life and letters in periodicals here and is the author of "Turgenev, The Man, His Art and His Age" (Century Co.).



